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Illustrator
Essentials

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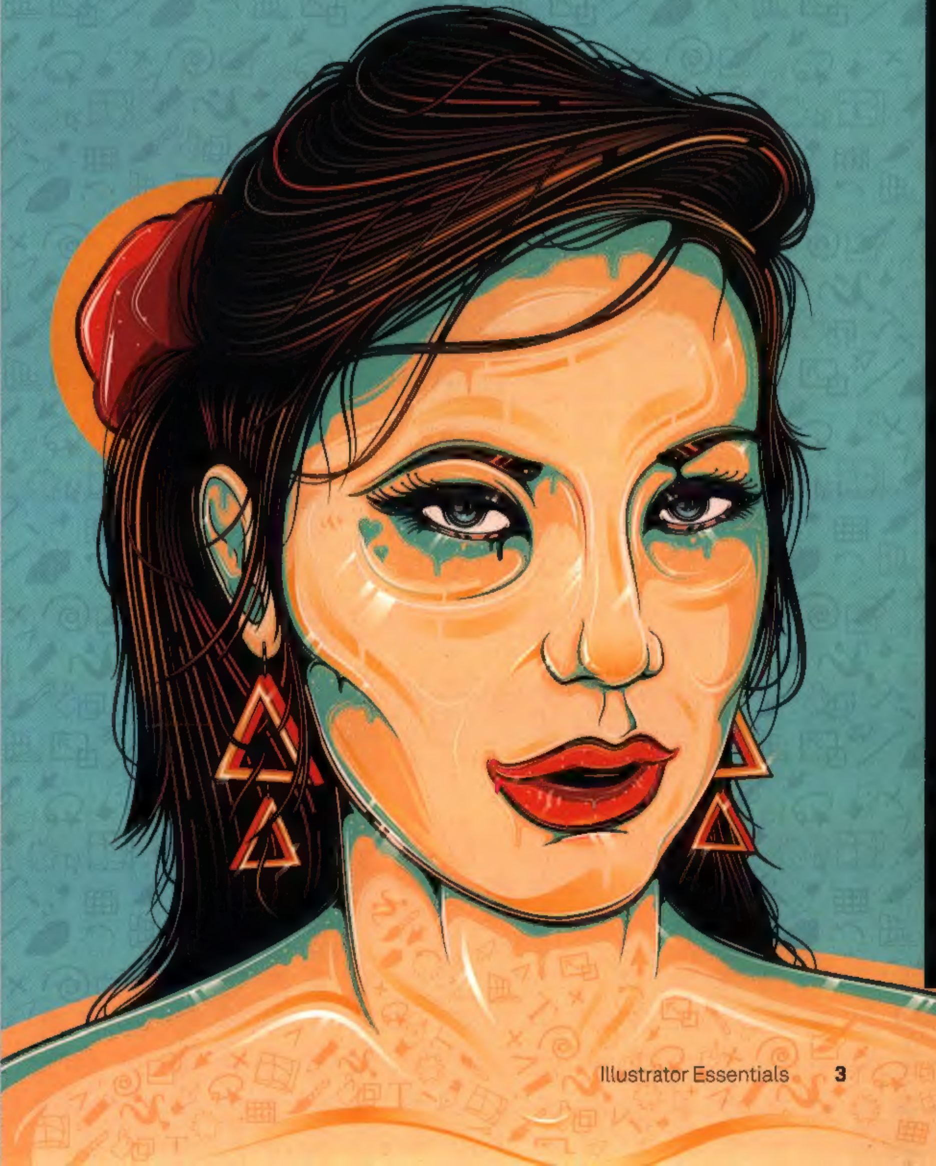
Illustrator
Essentials

Welcome to the first volume of Illustrator Essentials! With over 220 pages of fantastic advice it's an essential – as the name suggests – reference for getting started and furthering your skills in Adobe Illustrator.

There are nearly 30 step-by-step tutorials, a plethora of tips for all levels of Illustrator user and some great walkthroughs complete with video lessons that you'll find at www.computerarts.co.uk/illustratoressentials.

Finally, there's a massive showcase of Illustrator work and in-depth profiles of the world's best Illustrator artists. Enjoy!



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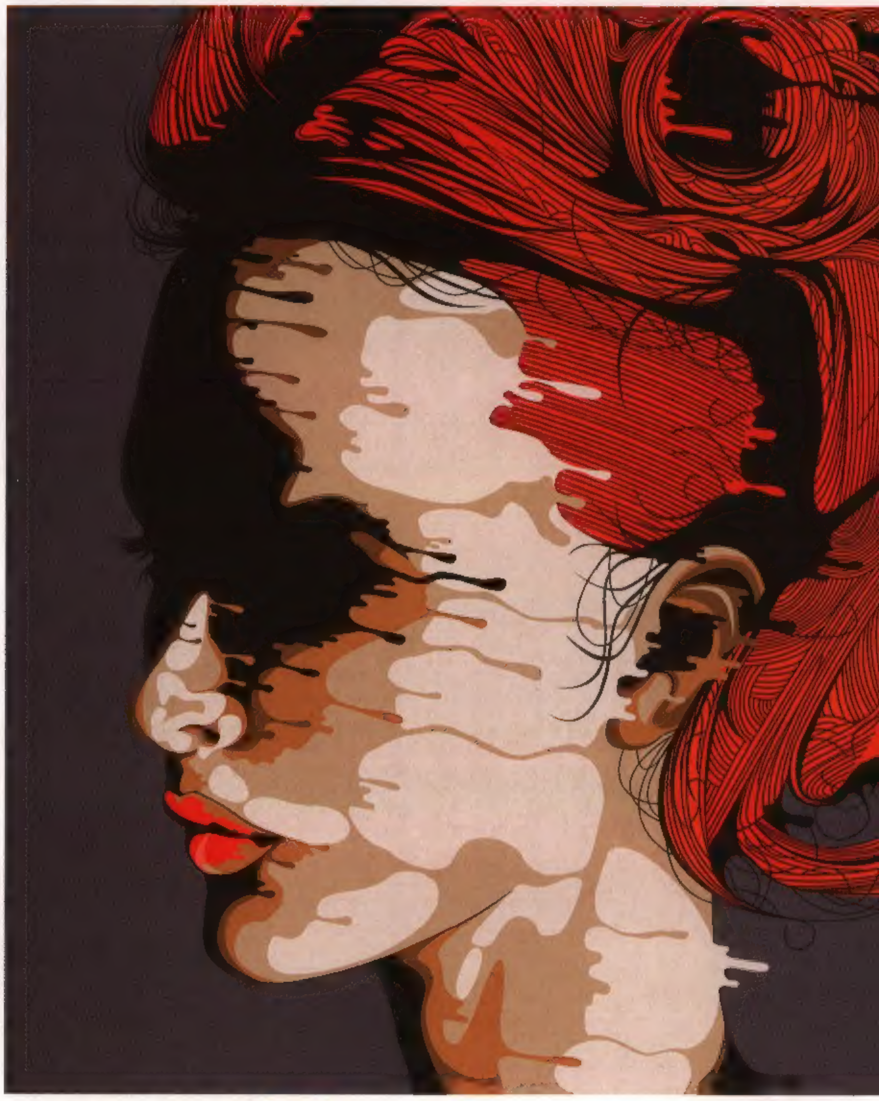

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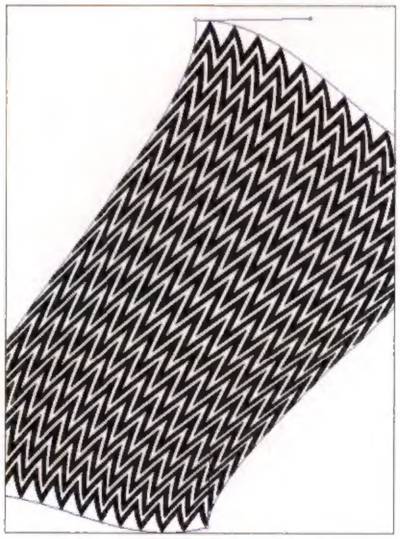

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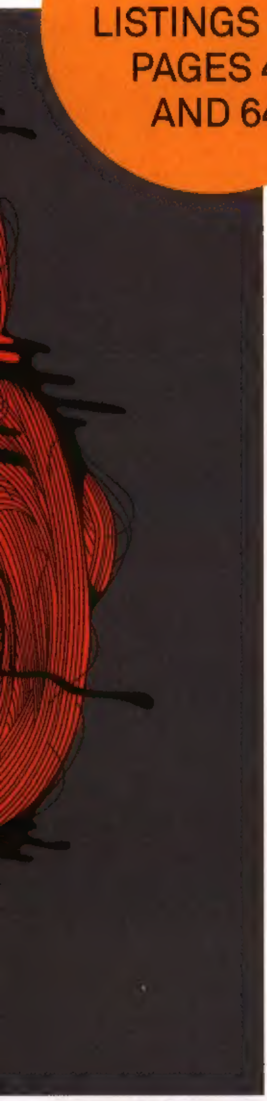

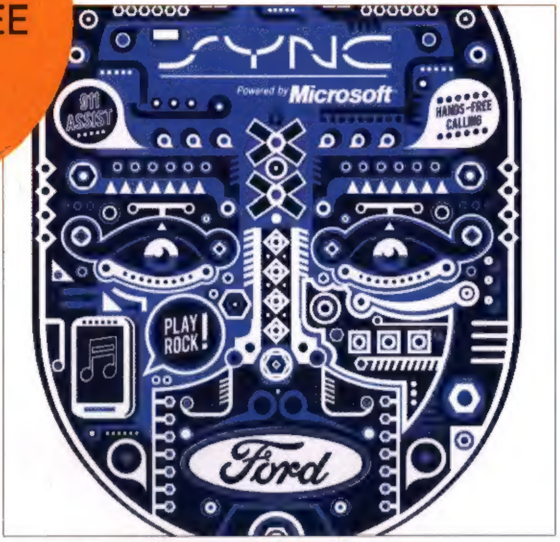
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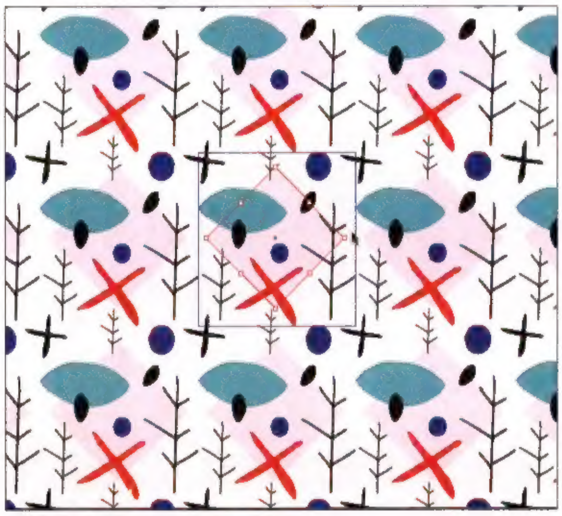

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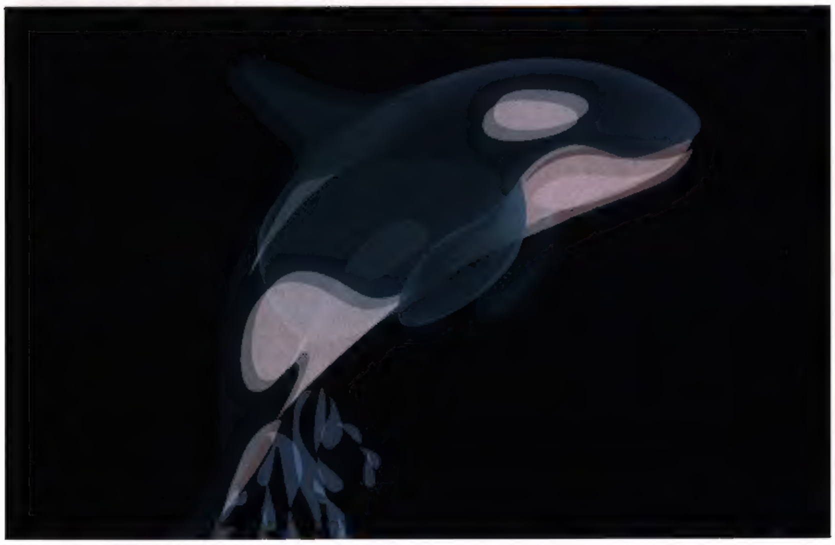

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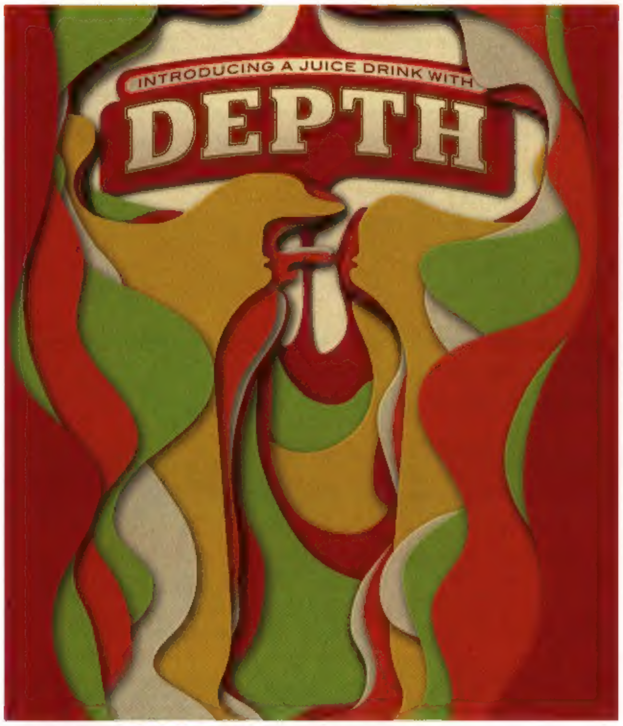
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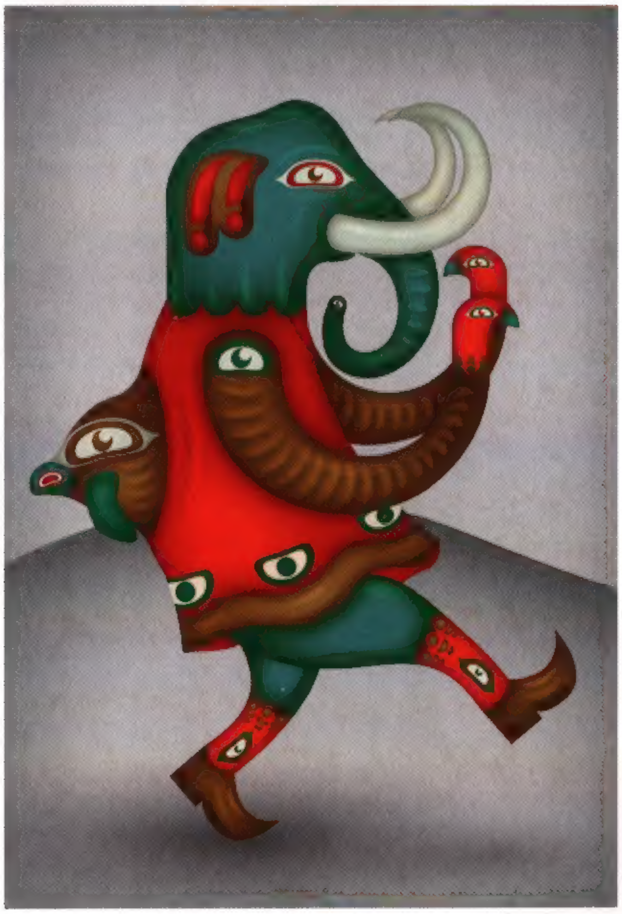

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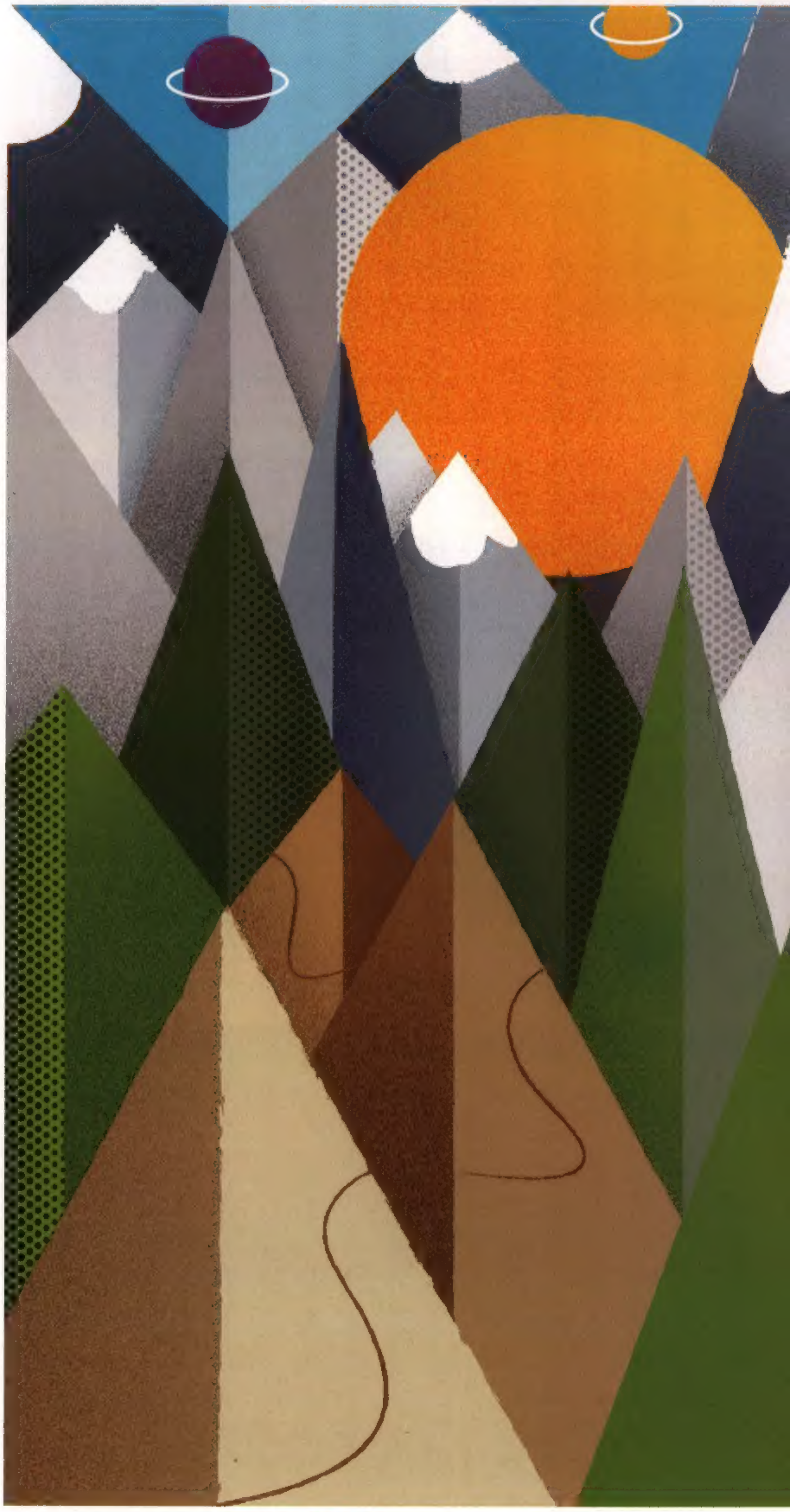

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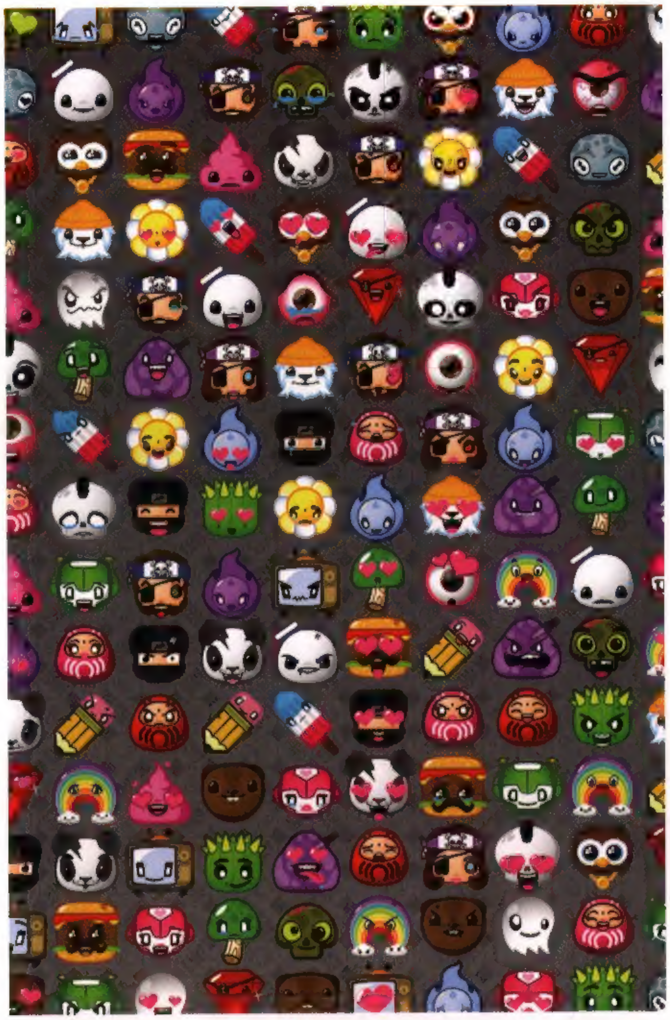

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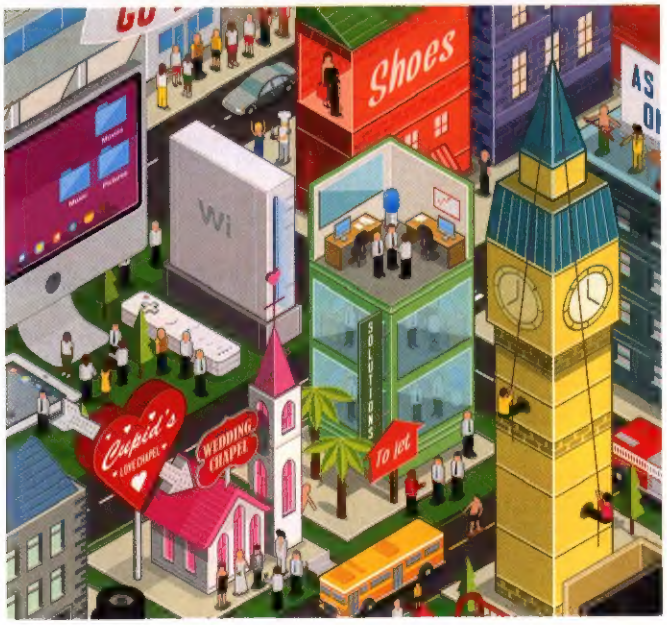
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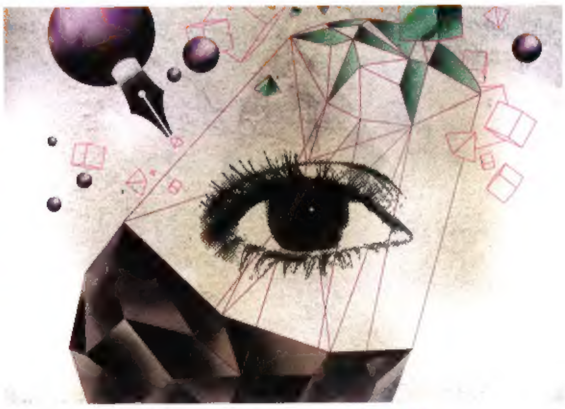

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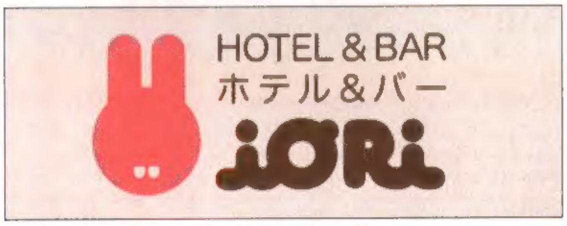
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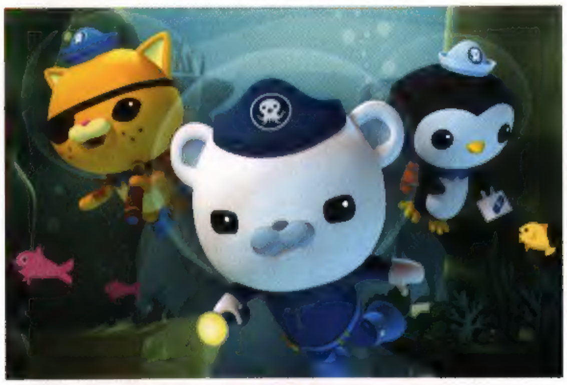

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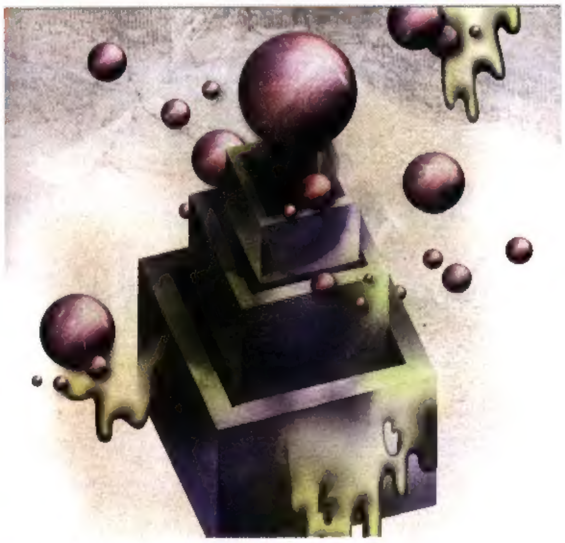

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ILLUSTRATOR: THE ULTIMATE TOOL GUIDE

Illustrator has such a remarkable toolset it's difficult to know where to start. The Tools panel alone has a plethora of options, with a huge number of flyouts between them – most of which you've probably never used. Over the next eight pages we bring you the ultimate guide to all of these. From the Symbol Stainer to the Stacked Column Graph – every tool that you may have thought superfluous to your needs is explored.

So, keep this handy reference guide on your desk – it will undoubtedly speed up your workflow and hone your Illustrator knowledge.

SELECTION TOOL

○**Keyboard shortcut: V**
The Selection tool, unsurprisingly, enables you to select, move, duplicate (with Alt/Opt), scale and rotate objects, groups or paths in your Illustrator document. If you have smart guides turned on, as you hover over a path – and so on – you get quick feedback in green as to what you're about to select. By holding Ctrl/Cmd, you can quickly change to the Direct Selection tool.

DIRECT SELECTION TOOL

○**Keyboard shortcut: A**
The Direct Selection tool – accessed by hitting the A key or using Ctrl/Cmd with the Selection tool – enables you to edit individual points and paths. For instance, you can drag a path out to alter a shape by clicking and dragging on it in a non-selected state. You can also drag on points for precise editing of objects.

GROUP SELECTION TOOL

○**Keyboard shortcut: Shift+A**
The Group Selection tool probably won't be used that often, but it's a handy way of selecting individual objects within a group and then different groups within your document. Clicking once on an object will select the object, clicking twice will select the group it sits in and clicking a third time will add the next group in your document to your selection. Continue clicking to add more groups.

MAGIC WAND TOOL

○**Keyboard shortcut: Y**
Use the Magic Wand tool to quickly select objects with the same kind of attributes – for instance, the same stroke weight, stroke colour, opacity or blending mode. Double-click the tool to customise it (a panel then appears where you can decide which attributes you want to select). This is a seriously handy tool – even though the Select>Same command gives you a bit more control.

LASSO TOOL

○**Keyboard shortcut: Q**
A simple one, this: drag over single points, a number of anchor points or objects to select them. When you've selected the points, you can use the Control panel to edit accordingly. You won't use it often, but it does offer another way to select points – albeit in a more freehand and less controlled way.

PEN TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: P**
The standard Bézier drawing tool that you'll find across the Creative Suite. Draw complex objects using points to connect them. Use the Alt/Opt key to change to the Convert Anchor Point tool and then edit the direction of your paths by adjusting the Bézier handles. In addition, the tool will automatically change to the Add Anchor Point tool when hovering over a path and the Delete Anchor Point tool when hovering over a point.

ADD ANCHOR POINT TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: +**
Use this tool to add anchor points to a path. It's more than likely that you'll just use the Pen tool to add anchor points, but if you prefer this way of working, the option is there.

DELETE ANCHOR POINT TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: -**
Use this to delete anchor points from your shapes (or just use the Pen tool).

CONVERT ANCHOR POINT TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: Shift+C**
The Convert Anchor Point tool is an essential drawing tool, enabling you to convert corner points into smooth points (and vice versa). Click and drag on an anchor point to use the tool.

TYPE TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: T**
Like the equivalents in other Creative Suite apps, Illustrator's Type tool enables you to create type – or a container of type – and edit it using the various typography panels (Character, Paragraph and so on – found under Window>Type) or the Control panel.

AREA TYPE TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: N/A**
The Area Type tool enables you to select a non-compound, non-masking path and type text inside it. For instance, create a shape using the Pen tool and then change to the Area Type tool, click on the path and then you'll be able to add horizontal text inside the object.

TYPE ON A PATH TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: N/A**
Create a path using the Pen tool and then use this to create text along it.

VERTICAL TYPE TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: N/A**
Almost exactly the same as the Type tool, only this one enables you to create vertical text (either by dragging a container or just clicking on the canvas).

VERTICAL AREA TYPE TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: N/A**
Add vertical type inside an object using this tool.

VERTICAL TYPE ON A PATH TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: N/A**
Create vertical type along a path using this tool.

LINE SEGMENT TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: **
Use this to draw individual straight-line segments. Change the stroke and other attributes (like all of these drawing tools) by using the Control panel. Double-click the tool for its options (default length and so on).-

ARC TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: N/A**
The Arc tool is lovely for drawing concave or convex curves without using the Pen tool. Double-click on the tool to bring up its range of options. Here you can change the length, whether the arc is open or closed, the direction of the arc and the slope. It's a very powerful tool and one that's no doubt underused and undervalued.

SPIRAL TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: N/A**
Use this tool to draw clockwise and anti-clockwise spirals. Click and drag to determine size and angle, or single-click on the canvas for more control over the size and shape of your spiral.

RECTANGULAR GRID TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: N/A**
Want to quickly draw a grid? Use this. Double-click the tool to change size and vertical and horizontal dividers, among other options.

POLAR GRID TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: N/A**
Use this to create circular grids. Double-click the tool for default size options and to change the number and skew of concentric and radial dividers. You can also choose to fill the grid and create a compound path from the ellipses.

RECTANGLE TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: M**
Draw a simple rectangle or square using this tool. Change the default size by clicking once on the canvas and changing the options.

ROUNDED RECTANGLE TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: N/A**
Use this to create rectangles and squares with rounded corners. To change the corner radius, click once on the canvas and enter the required number. You can edit the anchor points of the rounded corners for more control.

ELLIPSE TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: L**
Quickly create circles and ellipses. Hold Alt/Opt to draw from the centre and Shift to constrain. Click once on the canvas for precise control over the size of your circle or oval.

POLYGON TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: N/A**
Draw polygons with this tool, altering the number of sides and the size by simply selecting the tool and clicking once on the canvas.

STAR TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: N/A**
Quickly draw stars with different numbers of points. As with all the drawing tools, you can click once on the canvas to change options (in this case size and number of points), as well as use Shift to constrain proportions and Alt/Opt to draw from the centre for more control over the position of the shape.

FLARE TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: N/A**
It's not one you'll use very often, but is very handy for adding quick reflections and light effects to your objects. Clicking once on the canvas creates a flare and then enables you to set such options as size, rays, halo and rings. You can also click and drag on the canvas to create a larger flare.

PAINTBRUSH TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: B**
Use this tool to paint natural-media-like vectors onto your canvas. When used in conjunction with the Brushes panel it gives you a hugely powerful painting setup in which strokes remain infinitely editable without any loss of quality. Double-click the tool itself to change its basic options.

PENCIL TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: N**
Use the Pencil tool to create freehand paths and objects. Best used with a tablet, obviously. Double-click the tool to access its options.

SMOOTH TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: N/A**
Use this tool to quickly smooth a path – making it a lot straighter, for instance. Click-and-drag along the path to smooth it, and double-click the tool itself to experiment with its options.

PATH ERASER TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: N/A**
The Path Eraser tool can be used to erase parts of a path. Using it is simple: just drag along the length of the path segment that you want to remove.

BLOB BRUSH TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: Shift+B**
The Blob Brush enables you to paint using filled shapes rather than paths. Using it, you can quickly create complex objects. Alter the size of the brush on the fly by using the [and] keys. It's a great tool when used in conjunction with a Wacom tablet, and feels like you're painting in Photoshop or similar (but with the infinite scalability of vectors).

ERASER TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: Shift+E**
Use this tool like a brush to erase parts of an object. Alter the size and then paint into your objects to remove parts. Make sure you clean up the points of your new shape.

SCISSORS TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: C**
Use the Scissors tool to quickly cut sections from a path. Click once at the first point you want to cut and again at the second point. One object will become two separate paths that you can move and edit independently.

KNIFE TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: N/A**
The Knife tool enables you to cut objects in half. Simply drag the tool across the object or path. Once you've cut an object, you can then edit the two parts independently.

ROTATE TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: R**
Use the Rotate tool to quickly rotate objects, paths, groups and multiple selections either freely or at a specified angle by double-clicking on the tool and entering the required rotation angle. You can set the rotation pivot by dragging it on the canvas.

REFLECT TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: O**
Use this tool to quickly flip an object over a fixed axis. Double-click to expand the tool's options – you can change the reflection axis and create a copy of the object as you reflect.

SCALE TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: S**
You know what this one does – it scales an object around a fixed point (which you can change). You can also use this tool to reflect an object. Double-click the tool to reveal its options, which include choosing between Uniform and Non-Uniform scaling and whether you scale strokes and effects.

SHEAR TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: N/A**
Use the Shear tool to skew an object around a fixed point. Click and drag on the object to skew it, or double-click the tool for more precise transformation options.

RESHAPE TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: N/A**
The Reshape tool is very neat. It enables you to adjust selected anchor points while keeping the overall detail of the path intact. Select which points you want to edit and then drag the shape. It's great for subtle adjustments that don't affect the overall feel of your object or path.

LIVE PAINT BUCKET TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: K**
The Live Paint Bucket tool enables you to quickly paint faces and edges of live paint groups (and convert objects to live paint groups if you haven't already). As you hover over an object, the cursor displays as either one or three coloured squares, which represent the selected fill or stroke colour and, if you're using colours from a swatch library, the two colours adjacent to the selected colour in the library. It's much simpler than it sounds – essentially it enables you to colour up your illustrations very quickly.

SHAPE BUILDER TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: Shift+M**
The Shape Builder tool is almost like an interactive Pathfinder, enabling you to quickly merge and extract objects. Simply select the objects you want to merge, select the Shape Builder tool and then drag across the objects. It's worth experimenting with as it can be a very quick way to create complex shapes.

LIVE PAINT SELECTION TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: Shift+L**
This tool simply enables you to select Live Paint faces and edges, either individually or by dragging a marquee around the desired objects. To select faces or edges with the same fill or stroke, triple-click an item.

WIDTH TOOL

○**Keyboard shortcut: Shift+W**
Now this is a great tool. If you're after calligraphic effects, where strokes have a variable width, use the Width tool to create that effect. Simply hover over your path, click and drag to change the width of the stroke at that point.

WARP TOOL

○**Keyboard shortcut: Shift+R**
Use the Warp tool to interactively push and pull paths and objects using a brush-based approach, subtly moulding them into the shape you require. Holding down the Alt/Opt key before you start enables you to change the shape and size of the brush you use.

TWIRL TOOL

○**Keyboard shortcut: N/A**
You probably won't use this very often, but when you want to add swirling distortions to an object or path, you'll want to use the Twirl tool. Be careful, as you may end up with a lot of points. Like most of Illustrator's distortion tools, you can hold Alt/Opt to change the brush size and shape, and double-click the tool itself for further options.

PUCKER TOOL

○**Keyboard shortcut: N/A**
Think of the Pucker tool as an instrument to 'deflate' an object by moving control points towards the cursor. Use Alt/Opt to change the brush size. It's a tool that takes some getting used to, but can be invaluable for minor edits to your objects.

BLOAT TOOL

○**Keyboard shortcut: N/A**
The opposite to the Pucker tool, the Bloat tool 'inflates' an object. Essentially, you can use it to push parts of your object outwards or give them a more rounded feel. When used sparingly, it can be an excellent tool to have at your disposal.

SCALLOP TOOL

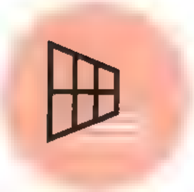
○**Keyboard shortcut: N/A**
This adds random inward curves to the edges of your objects: it's essentially for roughening up your shapes. Change the brush size by holding Alt/Opt before you use the tool – and then experiment with what size works best.

CRYSTALLIZE TOOL

○**Keyboard shortcut: N/A**
The opposite of the Scallop tool, this adds random spiked detail to the edges of your shapes. Again, it can be great for roughening up an object.

WRINKLE TOOL

○**Keyboard shortcut: N/A**
Also used for roughening up the edge of an object, the Wrinkle tool adds, er, wrinkles to the edges of your shapes. Experiment with brush sizes and remember that holding Alt/Opt enables you to change the brush size, and holding Shift as well constrains the shape of the brush.

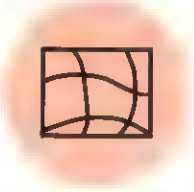


PERSPECTIVE GRID TOOL

○**Keyboard shortcut: Shift+P**
This useful tool makes it very easy to create isometric illustrations (or just those with the correct perspective without worrying about setting up your own vanishing points). After selecting the tool, click on the canvas to bring up the grid and edit it using the points on each axis. Click on the grid you want to draw on and begin drawing. Everything will match up to your grid. To get rid of the grid go to View>Perspective Grid>Hide Grid.

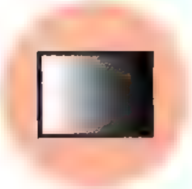
PERSPECTIVE SELECTION TOOL

○**Keyboard shortcut: Shift+V**
Once you've created your objects in perspective, you might want to select, move and transform them. In order to do this, use the Perspective Selection tool. Just drag an object and it will move in perspective. If you want to move it out of perspective, use the normal Selection tool.



MESH TOOL

○**Keyboard shortcut: U**
A great tool, but one that's tricky to master. The Mesh tool enables you to construct highly realistic vector images – skin or metal, for instance – using a number of points to blend colour together. First create an object, and then within that object begin selecting colour and using the Mesh tool to add the colour at certain points. Continue to build up subtle variations by adding points next to each other with slightly different colours. It's not easy to get right, but can yield some incredible results.



GRADIENT TOOL

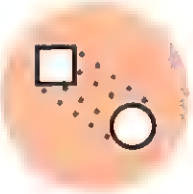
○ **Keyboard shortcut: G**
Use this in conjunction with the Gradient panel to create linear or radial gradients. You can click-and-drag across an object to define its gradient fill and then interactively edit that gradient using the slider that appears.

EYEDROPPER TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: I**
Use the Eyedropper to copy appearance attributes between objects in your Illustrator document. Double-clicking the tool enables you to specify which attributes you can copy. You can also use it to sample colours from raster images.

MEASURE TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: N/A**
Use this, as in InDesign and Photoshop, to measure the distance between two points. It's as simple as that.



BLEND TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: W**
The Blend tool is used to blend objects together. Just drag from one selected object to another with the tool. Make every part of your blend editable by going to Expand in the Object menu and then ungrouping.

KEYBOARD SHORTCUTS

Illustrator CS6

TOOLS

Selection	**V**
Direct Selection	**A**
Group Selection	**Shift+A**
Magic Wand	**Y**
Lasso	**Q**
Pen	**P**
Add Anchor Point	**+**
Delete Anchor Point	**-**
Convert Anchor Point	**Shift+C**
Type	**T**
Line Segment	\
Rectangle	**M**
Ellipse	**L**
Paintbrush	**B**
Pencil	**N**
Blob Brush	**Shift+B**
Eraser	**Shift+E**
Scissors	**C**
Rotate	**R**
Reflect	**O**
Scale	**S**
Width	**Shift+W**
Warp	**Shift+R**
Free Transform	**E**
Shape Builder	**Shift+M**
Live Paint Bucket	**K**
Live Paint Selection	**Shift+L**
Perspective Grid	**Shift+P**
Perspective Selection	**Shift+V**
Mesh	**U**
Gradient	**G**
Eyedropper	**I**
Blend	**W**
Symbol Sprayer	**Shift+S**
Column Graph	**J**
Artboard	**Shift+O**
Slice	**Shift+K**
Hand	**H**
Zoom	**Z**
Toggle Fill/Stroke	**X**
Default Colours	**D**
Swap Fill/Stroke	**Shift+X**
Colour	**,**
Gradient	**.**

VIEW

Toggle Screen Mode	**F**
Show/Hide All Palettes	**Tab**
Increase/Decrease Diameter	**]/[**
Toggle Drawing Mode	**Shift+D**

FILE

Units	**Ctrl/Cmd+,**
Other Script	**Ctrl/Cmd+F12**

EDIT

Paste in Front/Back	**Ctrl/Cmd+F/B**
Paste in Place	**Ctrl/Cmd+Shift+V**
Paste on All	**Alt/Opt+Shift+Ctrl/Cmd+V**
Colour Settings	**Shift+Ctrl/Cmd+K**

OBJECT

Transform	**Ctrl/Cmd+D**
Move	**Shift+Ctrl/Cmd+M**
Bring to Front	**Shift+Ctrl/Cmd+]**
Bring Forward	**Ctrl/Cmd+]**
Send Backward	**Ctrl/Cmd+[**
Send to Back	**Shift+Ctrl/Cmd+[**
Group	**Ctrl/Cmd+G**
Ungroup	**Shift+Ctrl/Cmd+G**
Unlock All	**Alt/Opt+Ctrl/Cmd+2**
Join	**Ctrl/Cmd+J**
Join Average	**Alt/Opt+Ctrl/Cmd+J**
Make	**Alt/Opt+Ctrl/Cmd+B**
Release	**Alt/Opt+Ctrl/Cmd+Shift+B**
Make with Warp	**Alt/Opt+Ctrl/Cmd+Shift+W**
Make with Mesh	**Alt/Opt+Ctrl/Cmd+M**
Make with Top Object	**Alt/Opt+Ctrl/Cmd+C**
Edit Contents	**Shift+Ctrl/Cmd+P**
Make Clipping Mask	**Ctrl/Cmd+7**
Release Clipping Path	**Alt/Opt+Ctrl/Cmd+7**
Make Compound Path	**Ctrl/Cmd+8**

○FEATURES
QUICK SKILLS
○TUTORIALS
○SHOWCASE

SYMBOL SPRAYER TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: Shift+S**
The Symbol Sprayer tool, used with the Symbols panel, enables you to 'spray' multiple instances of a symbol onto the artboard. You can then, using the tools in the flyout, edit these instances. It's handy for graphics that need to be repeated but all look slightly different (a shoal of fish, for instance).

SYMBOL SHIFTER TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: N/A**
Use the Symbol Shifter tool to move symbol instances around the artboard. Click and drag on the symbols to shift the instances around.

SYMBOL SCRUNCHER TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: N/A**
By clicking and holding or dragging, this tool enables you to move symbol instances either closer to each other – or by holding Alt/Opt – further away from one another.

SYMBOL SIZER TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: N/A**
This enables you to make instances bigger or (by holding Alt/Opt) smaller. Just click-and-hold on an instance, or drag across to make changes to more than one instance at once.

SYMBOL SPINNER TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: N/A**
Use this tool to rotate symbol instances. An arrow appears over each instance when you click-and-hold to show the angle of rotation.

SYMBOL STAINER TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: N/A**
The Stainer tool is great for making sure your instances have a different colour. Choose a colour from the Swatches panel and click on the symbol instances. The closer the instance to the centre of the tool, the more it is colourised. Great for quick colour edits.

SYMBOL SCREENER TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: N/A**
Like the Stainer tool, but applies opacity to the instance of a symbol. Again, the closer the instance to the centre of the tool when you click (or the longer you hold over an instance), the more transparent the instance becomes. It's very intuitive.

SYMBOL STYLER TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: N/A**
Using the Symbol Styler tool you can quickly apply a style – as specified in the Styles panel – to an instance of a symbol. It's hugely powerful.

COLUMN GRAPH TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: J**
Use this tool to create a standard bar chart or column graph that compares values using vertical columns next to each other. Click-and-drag and then enter or import your data.

STACKED COLUMN GRAPH TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: N/A**
Similar to the Column Graph tool, but creates a bar chart that compares values by having columns stacked on top of one another instead of side-by-side. This type of graph is useful for showing the relationship of parts to the total.

BAR GRAPH TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: N/A**
This is exactly the same as the Column Graph tool, but creates a graph with horizontal bars, instead of vertical.

STACKED BAR GRAPH TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: N/A**
Exactly the same as the Stacked Column Graph tool, but creates a chart with the bars running horizontally.

LINE GRAPH TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: N/A**
Use this to create a graph that shows the trend of one or more subjects over time. It's the kind of graph you'd see for sales figures or stocks, usually.

AREA GRAPH TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: N/A**
Similar to the Line Graph tool, but enables you to create a filled graph that emphasises totals as well as values.

SCATTER GRAPH TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: N/A**
Use this tool to create a scatter graph. Click-and-drag and enter the data.

PIE GRAPH TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: N/A**
Use this tool to create a standard pie chart. Once done, use the Direct Selection tool to select and colour segments.

RADAR GRAPH TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: N/A**
Also called 'web graphs', radar graphs compare sets of values at given points in time or in particular categories. Use this tool to quickly create one.

ARTBOARD TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: Shift+O**
Use this tool to create new artboards, and then scale them and move them around the document window. You can also delete an artboard by hitting the cross icon at the top-right.

SLICE TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: Shift+K**
By clicking and dragging with this tool you can create slices for when exporting web graphics.

SLICE SELECT TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: N/A**
Use this tool to select and move slices. As you move a slice, the others adjust to fit around it.

HAND TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: H**
It's more likely that you'll simply use the Spacebar than selecting this tool, but if you want to, this is the tool you select to pan around your document.

PRINT TILING TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: N/A**
Used in conjunction with the Artboard tool, this tool enables you to specify the printable area of your document and tile your prints.

ZOOM TOOL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: Z**
Zoom in and out of your document. Hold the Alt/Opt key to zoom out. You can also use the field at the bottom of the document to quickly zoom to a precise magnification.

FILL AND STROKE

Shows you the current fill and stroke colours. Hit D to specify the default options (white fill, black stroke) and X to swap between fill and stroke. You can hit Shift+X to swap the fill and stroke colours.

COLOR, GRADIENT, NONE

○ **Keyboard shortcut: , and .**
Quickly change the attributes of a selected object to colour it, give it a gradient or nothing. This will affect the stroke or fill, depending on what you have selected.

DRAW NORMAL

○ **Keyboard shortcut: Shift+D to switch modes**
Draw in Normal mode, with new objects appearing on top of objects on the artboard.

DRAW BEHIND

With this selected, new objects appear behind objects already on the artboard. You can send objects back of course, but you don't need to if this is selected.

DRAW INSIDE

Only enabled when you have an object selected, the Draw Inside mode enables you to draw inside other objects, creating a clipping mask. This mode is handy for making quick edits to shapes and retaining editability without the hassle of setting up clipping masks. Just remember to switch back to Draw Normal when you're done.

CHANGE SCREEN MODE

○ **Keyboard shortcut: F**
Switch between Standard Screen Mode, Full Screen with Menu Bar, and Full Screen Mode. You can cycle through modes using the F key.

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Illustrator Essentials

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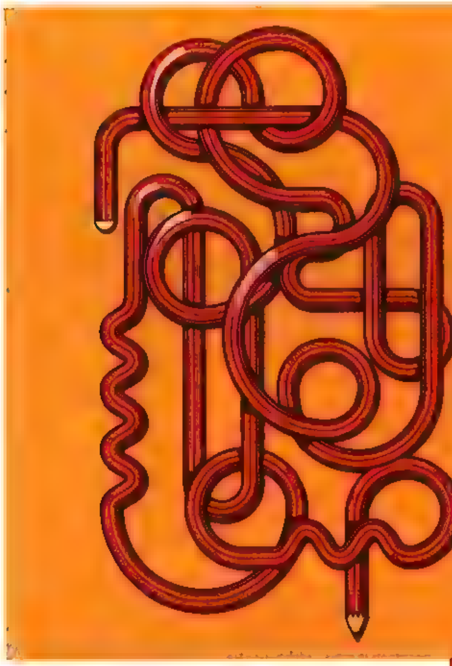
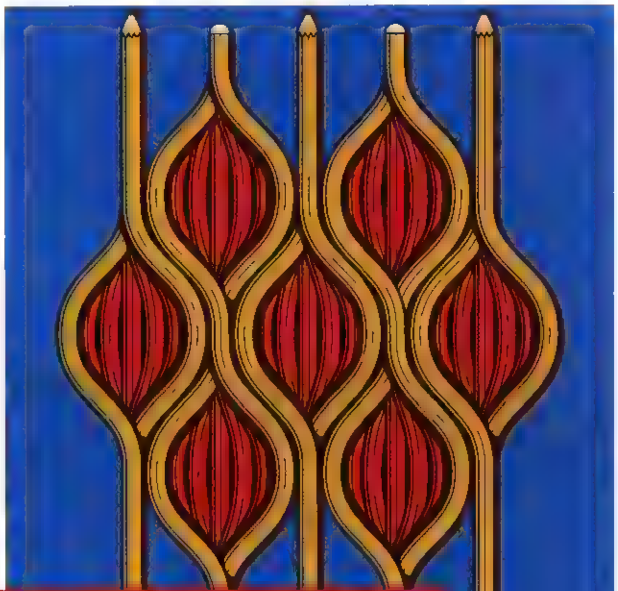


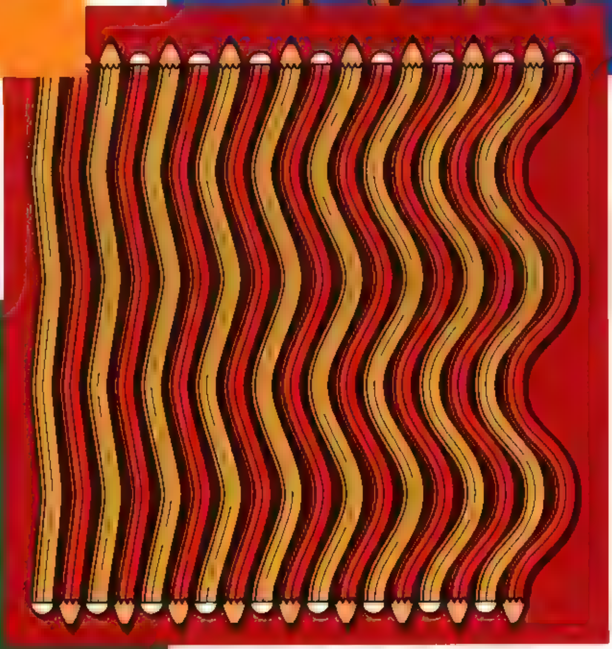
BEZIER CURVES AND PATHS **30**

Take tighter control of the basic building blocks of Illustrator to streamline your workflow and improve your linework

SYMBOLS AND BRUSHES **24**

When used as part of a pro workflow, bespoke brushes and symbols can really enhance your productivity



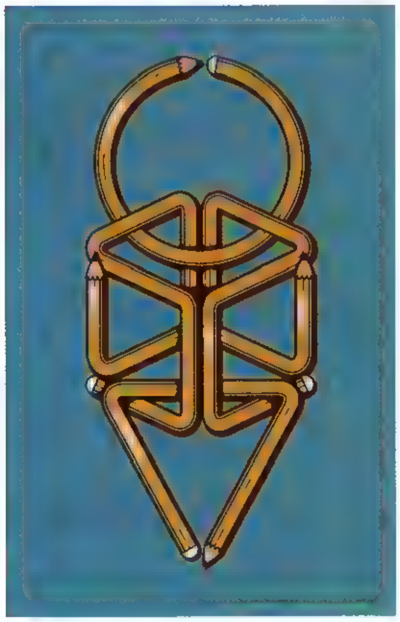


ARTBOARDS AND GRIDS **42**

Master Illustrator's improved artboard capabilities and speed up your workflow on complex multi-part projects

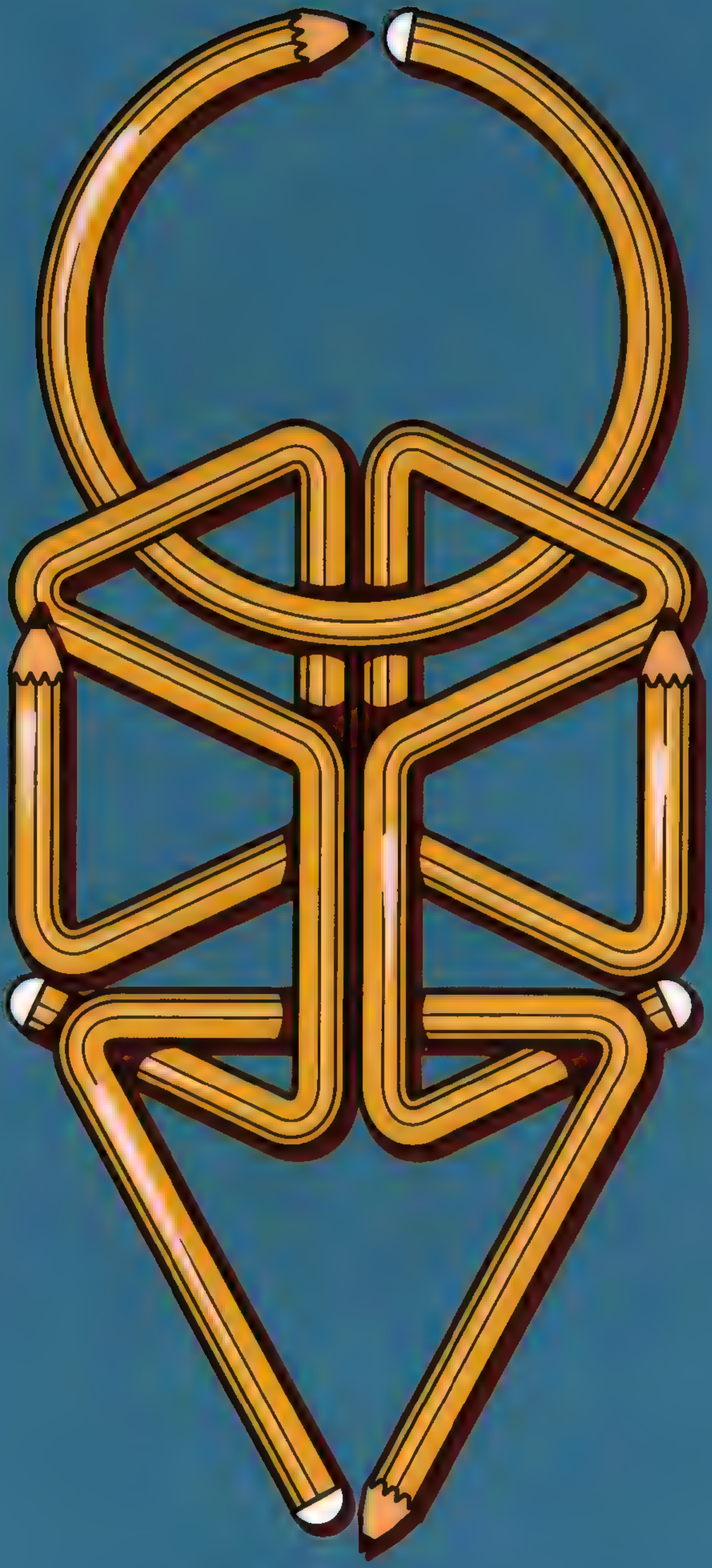
EFFECTS **36**

By fully utilising the Effects menu you can free up time by adding depth and texture in a versatile, non-destructive way



PATHFINDER AND SHAPE BUILDING **18**

Creating shapes is a key part of most Illustrator workflows, particularly for logo design and illustration. Here's how to get more from the powerful tools

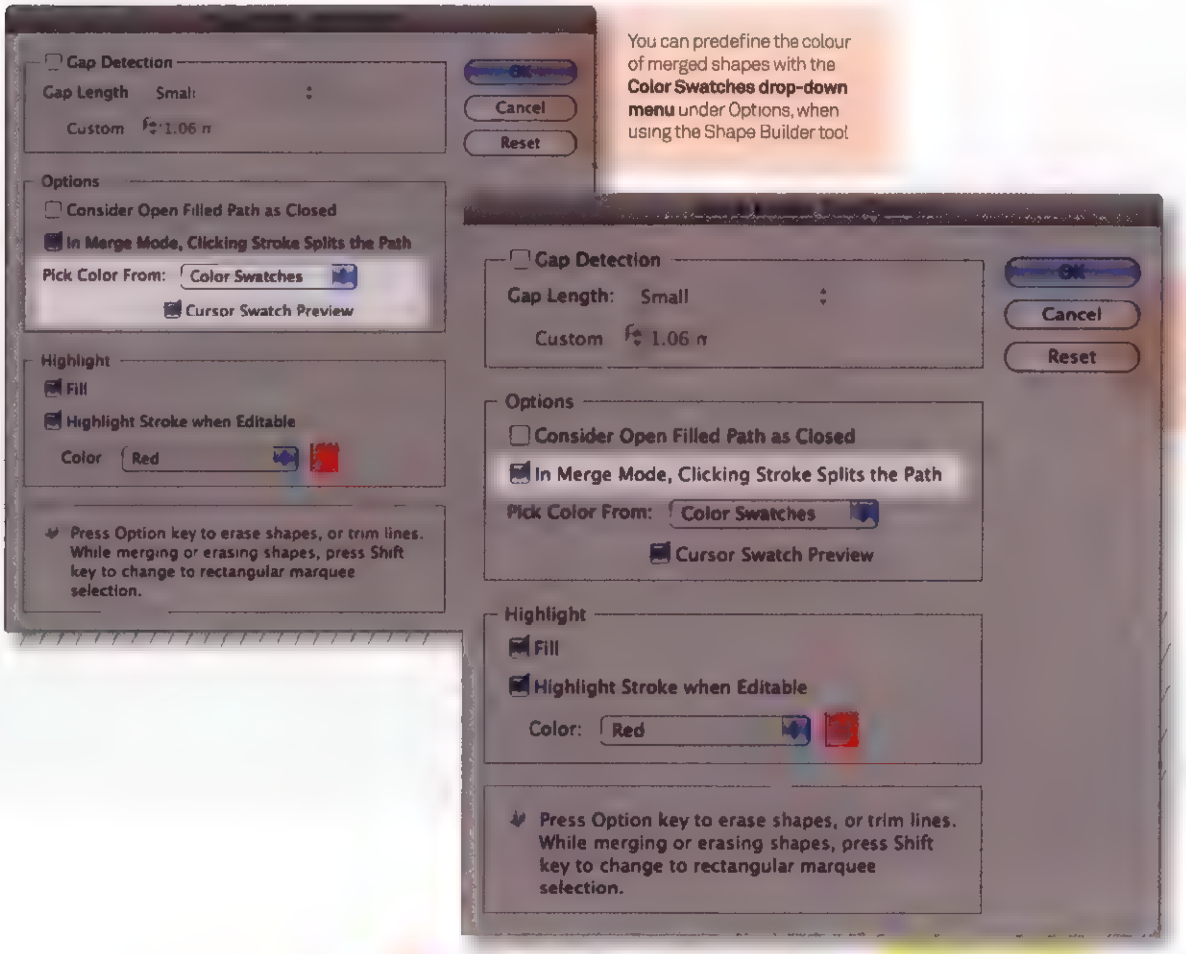


The pro's guide to

PATHFINDER AND SHAPE BUILDING

Creating shapes is a key part of most Illustrator workflows, particularly for logo design and illustration. Here's how to get more from the powerful tools available

The pro's guide to…
Pathfinder and shape building



☐ Gap Detection
Gap Length: Small
Custom: 1.06 in

Options
☐ Consider Open Filled Path as Closed
☑ In Merge Mode, Clicking Stroke Splits the Path
Pick Color From: Color Swatches
☑ Cursor Swatch Preview

Highlight
☑ Fill
☑ Highlight Stroke when Editable
Color: Red

Press Option key to erase shapes, or trim lines. While merging or erasing shapes, press Shift key to change to rectangular marquee selection.

☐ Gap Detection
Gap Length: Small
Custom: 1.06 in

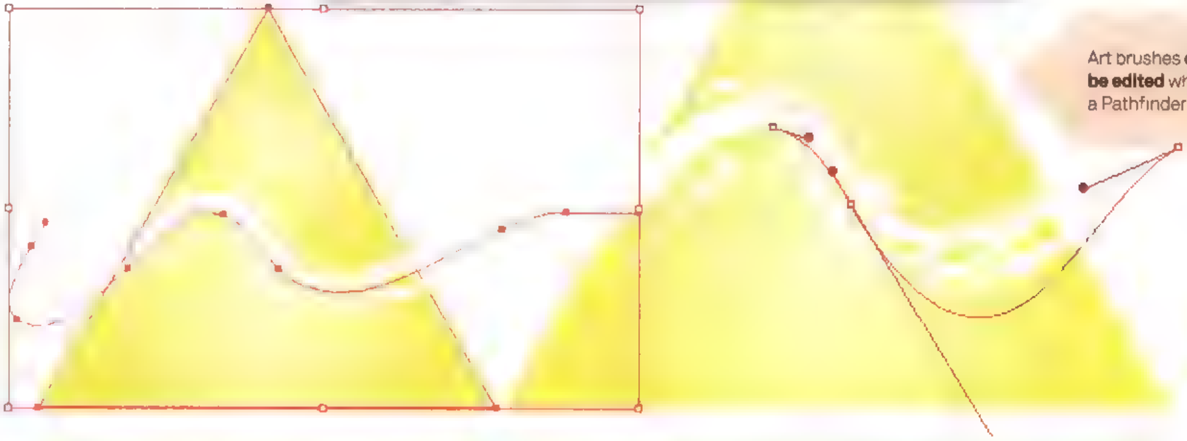
Options
☐ Consider Open Filled Path as Closed
☑ In Merge Mode, Clicking Stroke Splits the Path
Pick Color From: Color Swatches
☑ Cursor Swatch Preview

Highlight
☑ Fill
☑ Highlight Stroke when Editable
Color: Red

Press Option key to erase shapes, or trim lines. While merging or erasing shapes, press Shift key to change to rectangular marquee selection.

You can predefine the colour of merged shapes with the **Color Swatches drop-down menu** under Options, when using the Shape Builder tool

'In Merge Mode, Clicking Stroke Splits the Path' ensures that you have **full control over not only a shape**, but also its path



Art brushes **can still be edited** while under a Pathfinder effect

The Pathfinder panel is undeniably one of the most important and powerful aids in Illustrator, letting you combine objects into new shapes. However, for many designers the Pathfinder panel has traditionally been the source of much confusion, providing myriad similar-looking buttons that represent different options. It's not uncommon for professional designers to get by working with just four or five of the 11 available options – often with little idea of what the rest are for.

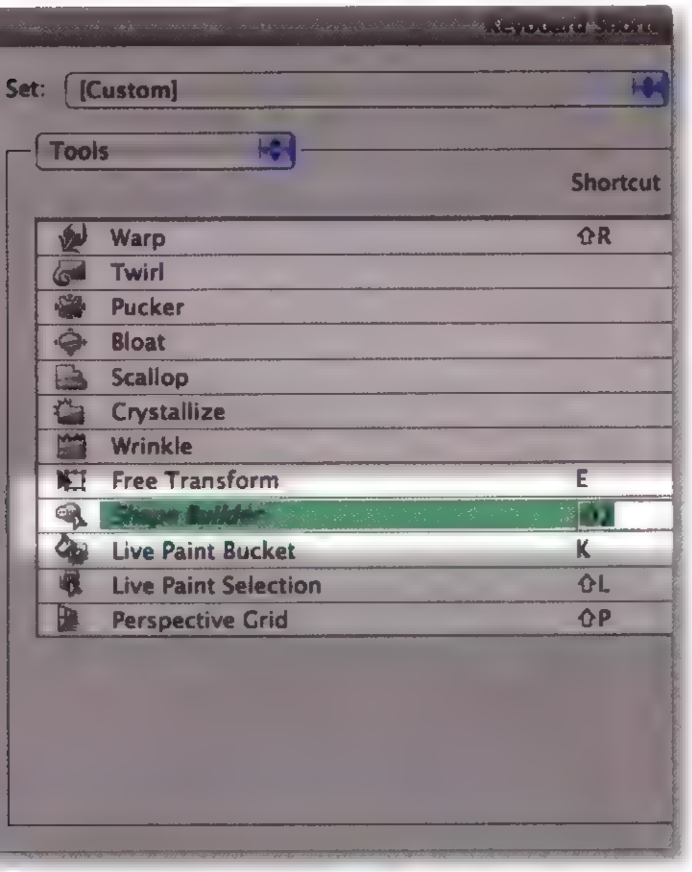
It appears that Adobe has tapped into the tangle that is the Pathfinder panel and addressed it in Illustrator CS5 by incorporating a new, quicker method of merging or subtracting shapes via the Shape Builder tool (Shift+M). Essentially, it's a powerful WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get) method of uniting, subtracting or intersecting shapes – the Live Paint of shape building, if you like.

The tool enables you to build shapes freely through an intuitive dragging method. The point at which you begin to drag is where Shape Builder defines the topmost object, regardless of whether it is in fact at the top. In the default setting, this also defines the colour of the final shape. The Shape Builder tool also offers the option to define the colour of the merged object, even if the desired colour isn't that of one of the shapes. With the object selected and the tool chosen, you can pick your colour from the Swatch palette and then apply the effect. This option is activated through double-clicking the Shape Builder icon and selecting 'Pick Color From Swatches' from the drop-down menu.

In addition, the handy dragging function enables you to define what kind of shape you'd like to build, depending on whether you drag to the intersection or to another overlapping shape. The Shape Builder tool is especially powerful when you're working with paths, because it allows for the removal or splitting of segments from paths. This feature can be further enhanced by checking 'In Merge Mode, Clicking Stroke Splits the Path' in the tool's Options panel. This is particularly good for the accurate dissection of paths without the need of a fill, and can come in handy when strokes need to be trimmed to fit a shape.

Using the Shape Builder tool

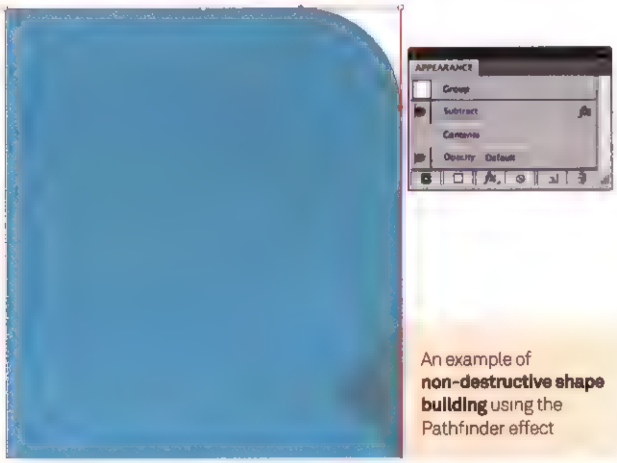
Dissect and trim shapes to create the forms that you want



Set: [Custom]

Tools

	Shortcut
Warp	⇧R
Twirl	
Pucker	
Bloat	
Scallop	
Crystallize	
Wrinkle	
Free Transform	E
Shape Builder	[illegible]
Live Paint Bucket	K
Live Paint Selection	⇧L
Perspective Grid	⇧P



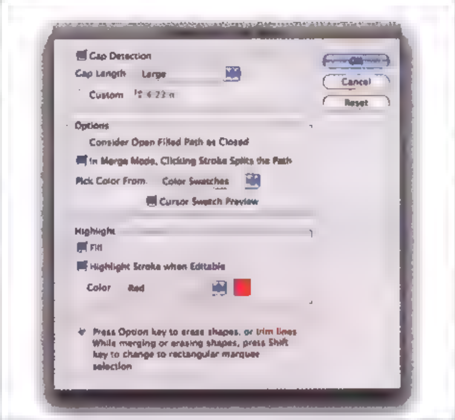
An example of **non-destructive shape building** using the Pathfinder effect

The Shape Builder tool is an excellent alternative to the occasionally cumbersome Pathfinder panel. It streamlines your workflow and merges shapes efficiently and intuitively. One effective way to benefit from this is to remember the shortcut for the tool, because some operations take the same number of clicks as the Pathfinder panel.

It might also help to adjust the shortcut for the tool if you're right-handed, otherwise your hand will need to leave the mouse to punch it in. Shift+Z, for example, is a good option that you can type with your left hand.

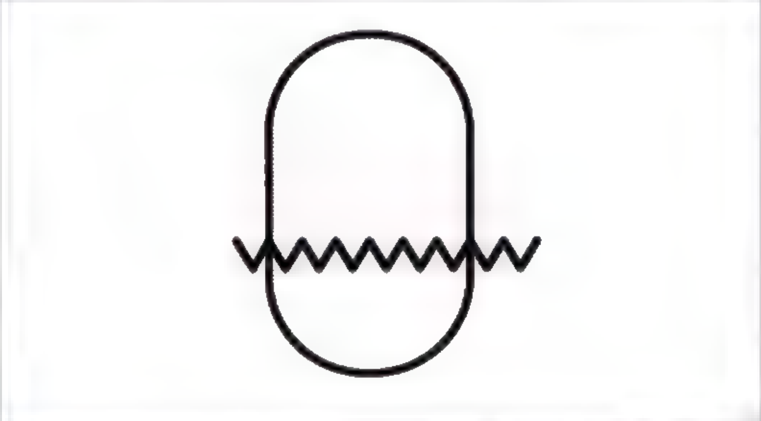
Using the Pathfinder effect (Effect>Pathfinder) – as opposed to the traditional panel – is a great, non-destructive way to customise a shape. It works in much the same way as the palette, but as an effect: this means that you can edit or remove the treatment and return your base shape to its original state.

The Pathfinder palette offers an option that's similar, where you create a compound shape from several smaller shapes – this is done by holding Alt/Opt while clicking the desired →

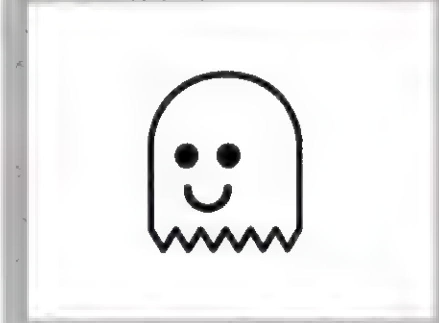


☑ Gap Detection
Gap Length Large
Custom 6.22 n
Options
Consider Open Filled Path as Closed
☑ In Merge Mode, Clicking Stroke Splits the Path
Pick Color From Color Swatches
☑ Cursor Swatch Preview
Highlight
☑ Fill
☑ Highlight Stroke when Editable
Color Red
Press Option key to erase shapes, or trim lines While merging or erasing shapes, press Shift key to change to rectangular marquee selection

01____ First ensure that 'In Merge Mode, Clicking Stroke Splits the Path' is selected in the Shape Builder options. This is accessed by double-clicking the Shape Builder icon in the left menu, and means that you have full control over not only the shapes but also the paths involved, allowing for precise dissection and trimming, which is what we'll be doing here.



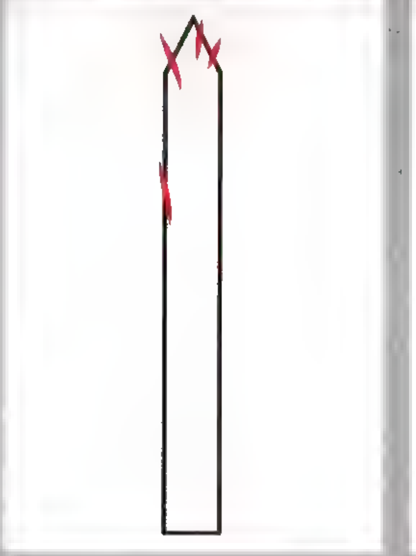
02____ Ensure that you've selected the relevant shapes before you use the Shape Builder tool. Here, I've chosen to create a simple ghoul using a rounded rectangle and zigzag path as a template. With the shape selected, hold the Alt/Opt key and left-click on the parts of the path you'd like to remove. The tool finds and breaks up paths, based on the points where they overlap. In this scenario, I'd like to remove the bottom part of the rounded rectangle, as well as the excess parts of the zigzag path.



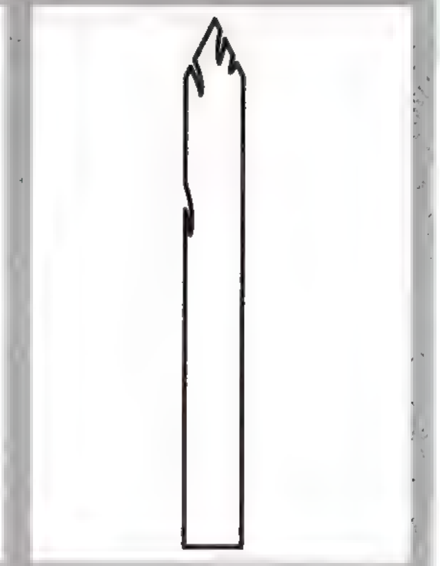
03____ The final step is to create a shape from the two paths. To do this, direct select (A) the two bottom corner points of the ghoul. With these selected, you can either press Ctrl/Cmd+J or go to Object>Path>Join in the top main menu. Apply this function to both ends of the ghoul to close the paths and create the shape.

Pathfinder effect: Subtract

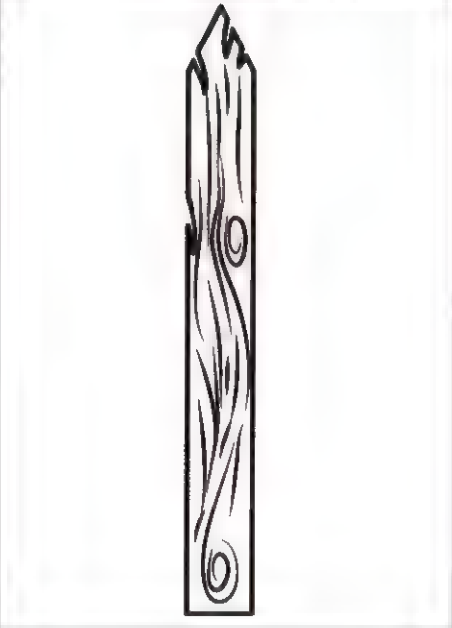
A simple way to remove the parts of a shape that you don't need



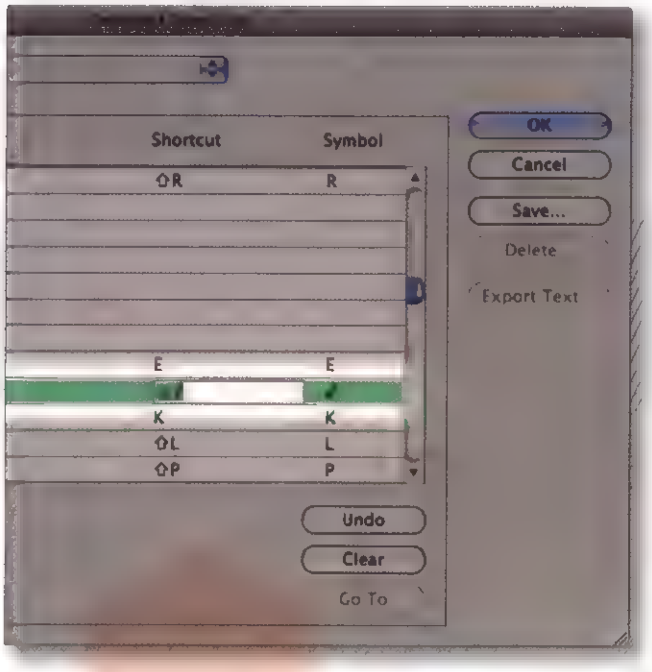
01 — An excellent method for removing the unwanted parts of a shape is to use the Subtract effect. To add some character to a plank of wood, for example, you might want to take some chips out of the basic shape. Simply use a custom brush (I've gone for a tapered one) and define the chunks that you'd like to take out.



02 — The Pathfinder effect will only work on a grouped object or targeted layer, so group the object to make it easier to manage. Ensure that the bottom-most shape is the one that you'd like to add or subtract from. Once this is done, go to Effect>Pathfinder>Subtract. In your Appearance palette you'll now see a Subtract effect.

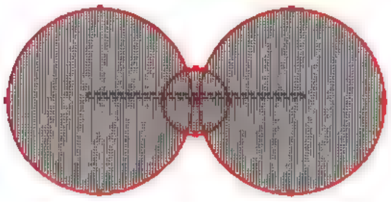


03 — Finish off the shape with some more textures. The removed chips make it look more weathered than the initial clean base. Furthermore, you still have the original shape intact, should you require more variations of the wood. The ease with which you can add, remove or adjust paths means that your work can be as detailed as you want, and still remain manageable

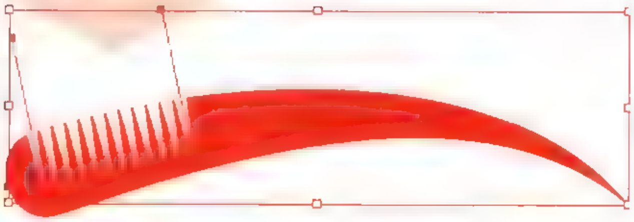


Changing the shortcut for the Shape Builder, particularly if you're a right hander, can be beneficial to your workflow and efficiency

The Shape Builder enables you to **merge, subtract or intersect** different overlapping shapes



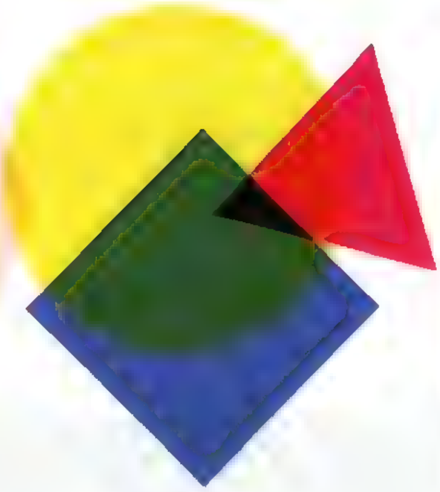
Strokes can be used as masks in the Pathfinder palette. Even trickier elements, such as blends, are supported



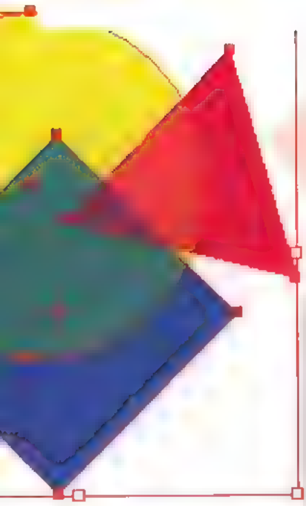
→ effect, and the result is something reminiscent of a clipping mask. However, the main drawback of this method is that while the shape can be changed, its appearance and attributes can't. As a result, many professional designers prefer using the Pathfinder effect instead, because it offers much more freedom and the ability to fully customise a shape.

The Pathfinder effect also offers extra room for variations and control and is much more manageable. The effect works when you group two or more objects together. Alternatively, there's the option to target an entire layer for the effect, but this depends on what kind of project you're working on – you might prefer to keep your design in groups.

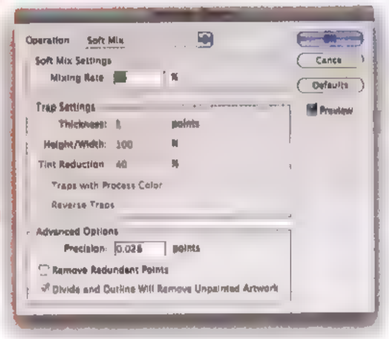
In addition, because it's an effect, you can add multiple treatments by creating many levels of groups. This functionality can be particularly helpful if you're creating custom fonts, or when there needs to be a number of variations of a particular shape. The effect enables you to adjust the shapes to create different versions using the same base. It can also be useful



Combine colours while maintaining accurate values using the Hard Mix option in the Pathfinder palette, as here



Intensity can be customised with the Pathfinder effect's useful Soft Mix option



Soft Mix Settings
Mixing Rate: %
Trap Settings
Thickness: 1 points
Height/Width: 100 %
Tint Reduction: 40 %
Traps with Process Color
Reverse Traps
Advanced Options
Precision: 0.028 points
☐ Remove Redundant Points
☑ Divide and Outline Will Remove Unpainted Artwork

Five pro tips

1/ Remove Redundant Points

[illegible]

2/ Scissors and Join tools

Two valuable tools for building shapes are Scissors and Join. Scis[illegible] the Pathfinder panel, these tools are particularly good for building custom and unconv[illegible]

3/ Hard and Soft Mix

[illegible]

[illegible]

4/ Shape Builder tool

[illegible] alternative to the Pathfinder. [illegible] capable of a multitude of tasks, one of its best features is that it conducts complex actions in a small number of clicks. Memorising the shortcut will streamline your workflow, [illegible]

5/ Pathfinder clipping masks

[illegible] Pathf[illegible] another [illegible] The Pathfinder [illegible]

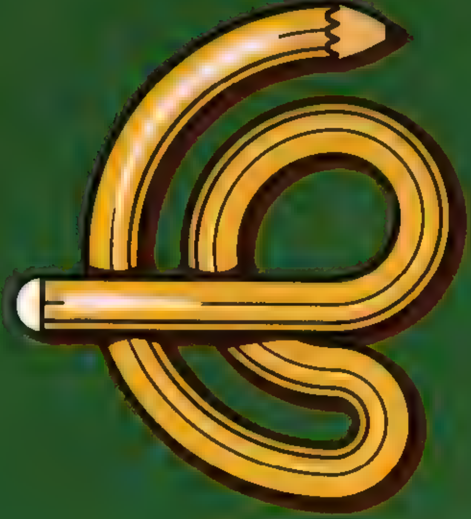
when you want to accurately add rounded corners to type without destroying the integrity of a font, for example.

One excellent application of the Pathfinder effect is to couple it with Illustrator's artistic brushes. What really sets the effect version aside from the panel is that it treats brushes as shapes instead of simple paths. For example, the textures in the default chalk brush would translate across if applied to a shape when using the Pathfinder effect. This is a simple yet extremely effective way to add more depth and character to your design work using basic functions.

The most notable advantage of all this is that the stroke and path remain editable, meaning that anchor points and appearances are still adjustable. What's more, the effect even subtracts strokes from strokes, allowing for more intricate and complicated creations.

Through the above methods, the Pathfinder effect can be used not only as a powerful and non-destructive shape builder, but also as a means by which you can create tidy clipping masks for a variety of uses. The effect even goes as far as masking trickier objects, such as blends, for instance.

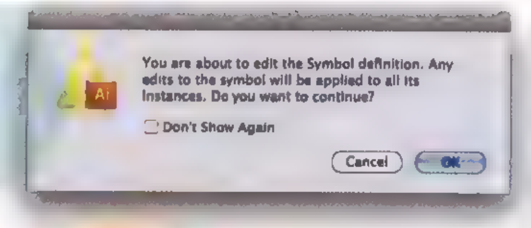
The Pathfinder and Shape Builder tools are highly versatile and lend themselves to a gamut of creative tasks. They demonstrate that in Illustrator there's always more than one way to do something – and there isn't necessarily a right or wrong way to do it. However, if you take the time to experiment with the different options, you'll soon find yourself working faster and more efficiently.



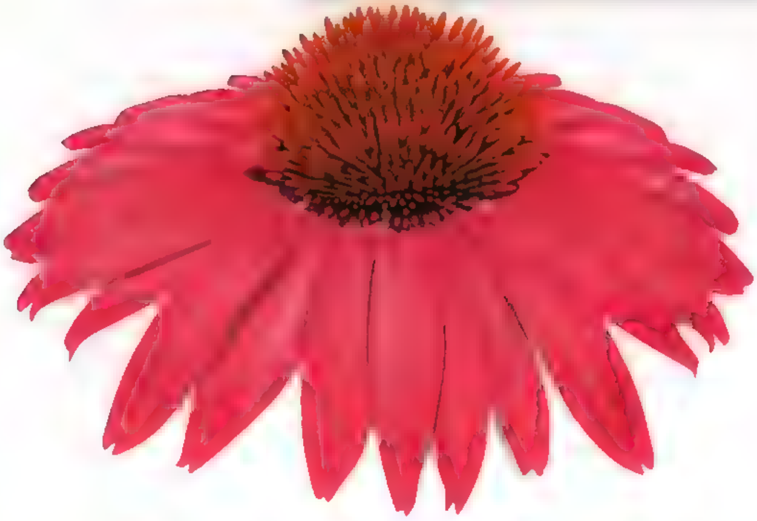
The pro's guide to SYMBOLS AND BRUSHES

When used as part of a pro workflow, bespoke brushes and symbols can really enhance your productivity

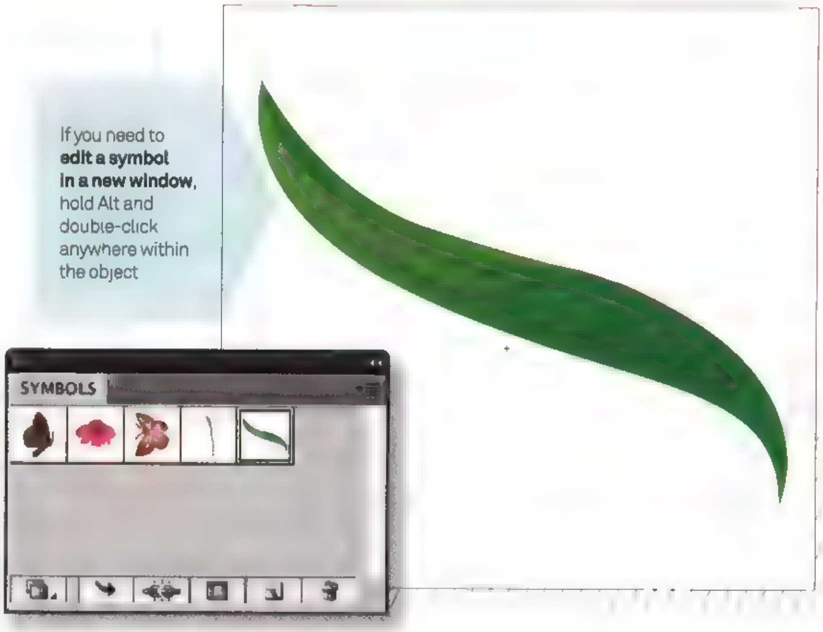
Modifying the parent symbol will amend every instance of it, **saving a lot of time**


You are about to edit the Symbol definition. Any edits to the symbol will be applied to all its instances. Do you want to continue?

☐ Don't Show Again



If you need to **edit a symbol in a new window**, hold Alt and double-click anywhere within the object



Five pro tips

1/ Reset Symbols

[illegible] nto the right [illegible] and [illegible]

2/ Replace Symbol

[illegible] king with similar [illegible] that differ only in [illegible] in them, it's [illegible]

3/ Modify

[illegible] nd hold [illegible] you double [illegible] saves time [illegible]

4/ Variable Scaling

Create var [illegible] in proportion [illegible] re for step [illegible]

5/ Map Art

[illegible] mbols for different [illegible] object. Map Art is [illegible]

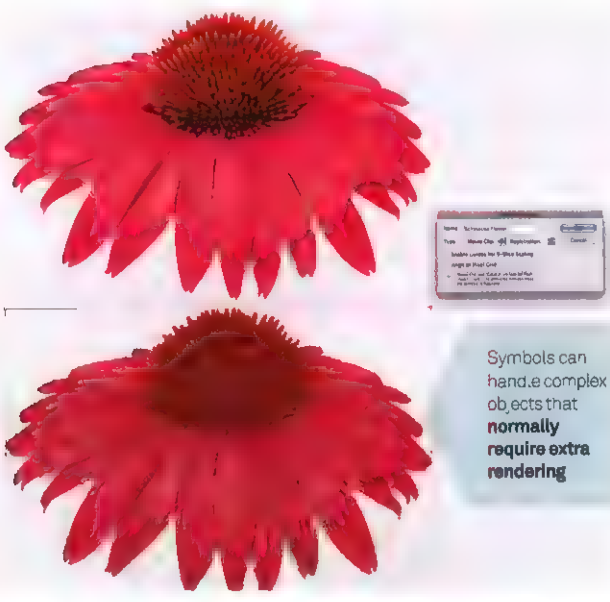
Now well into its twenties, it's safe to say that Illustrator has passed its adolescence and is now a fully mature product. The application is packed with tons of invaluable features that we have all used a million times, growing to love some more than others. Most designers have become so comfortable with the array of tools that they have started to take them for granted. Every new edition of Illustrator, though, brings a number of overdue technical tweaks and a handful of new features. Some of the fundamental features were introduced a long time ago and have provided solid ground to build on. Over the next few pages, we'll take an in-depth look at how to get the most out of two key tools: Symbols and Brushes.

When repeating tasks on a daily basis, symbols can make trusty companions for more efficient workflow, especially when the headache of grouping, scaling and modifying complicated objects becomes too much. Symbols are very similar to Libraries in InDesign and will help keep the items you use regularly in one handy place.

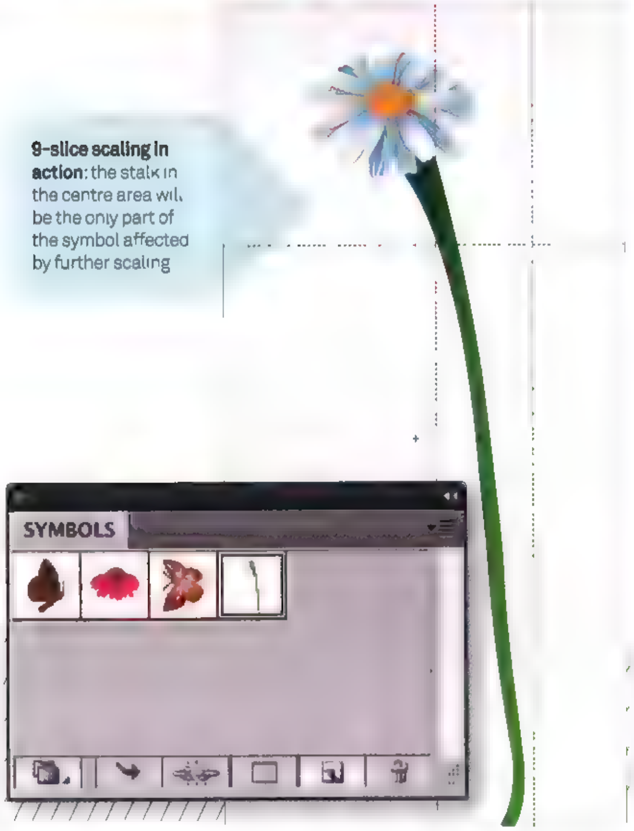
The majority of Illustrator's factory presets do not seem to be very appetising, and often look a bit dated. Not many designers would settle for the generic rocketship or randomly coloured Rubik's cube. Despite this, the Symbols feature is indispensable for creating vector artwork, and the fun begins when you start to set up your own presets

Creating a new symbol is straightforward. Highlight an object or group of paths and do one of the following: click the New Symbol button on the Symbols panel menu, drag the object onto the panel, or simply click F8 on your keyboard. Remember to name your symbols so they are easy to find again later.

To modify your new symbol, hold down the Alt key and double-click the symbol within the artwork. Alternatively, double-click the icon within the Symbols panel. The object will



Symbols can handle complex objects that **normally require extra rendering**



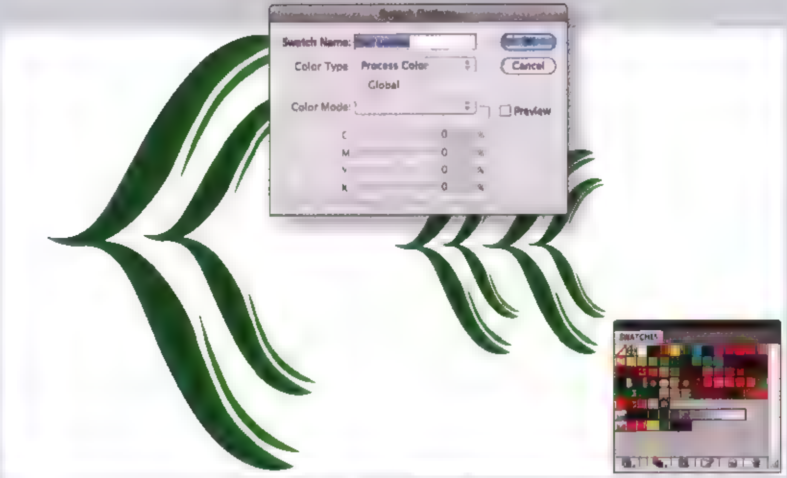
9-slice scaling in action: the stalk in the centre area will be the only part of the symbol affected by further scaling

open in a new window, away from the main illustration area. Even if you have scaled or rotated your object, the new window will open the symbol in its original size. When you have finished editing your symbol, save it and the changes will take effect on all instances. This is an excellent time saver when you use the same symbol multiple times in one project.

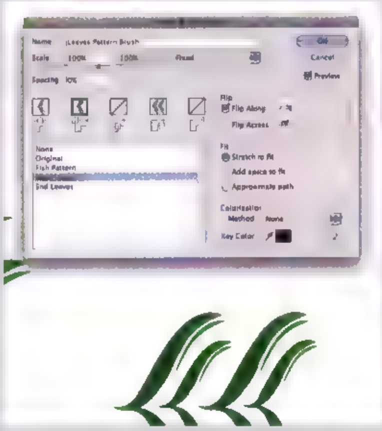
One of the most impressive new features, introduced in Illustrator CS5, is 9-slice scaling. Traditionally, the only way to scale a symbol was to hold down the Shift key and drag your selected object to the required size. Now, when you create a new symbol, you can tick the 9-slice scaling option from the pop-up dialogue box. When you modify the symbol, you'll find a set of four guides around the object, which you can edit individually. The name for 9-slice scaling comes from the fact that this tool divides each object into nine segments and any component that falls inside the guides can be resized. This is a great addition →

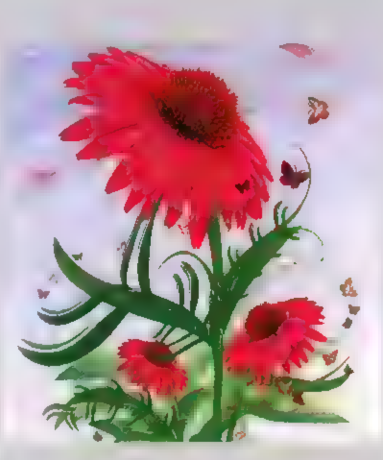
The Pattern Brush explained

Master this complex yet rewarding tool and stop wasting time slaving over repeated elements in your work



01___ At first sight the Pattern Brush seems a bit complicated, but the results are definitely worth the trouble. To make the components of your brush, you need to create particles for beginning, middle and end points. Once you have finished drawing, select and drag the components onto the Swatches panel, making sure you have named the elements. The Pattern Brush does not work with gradients or spot colours – only simple solid tones.





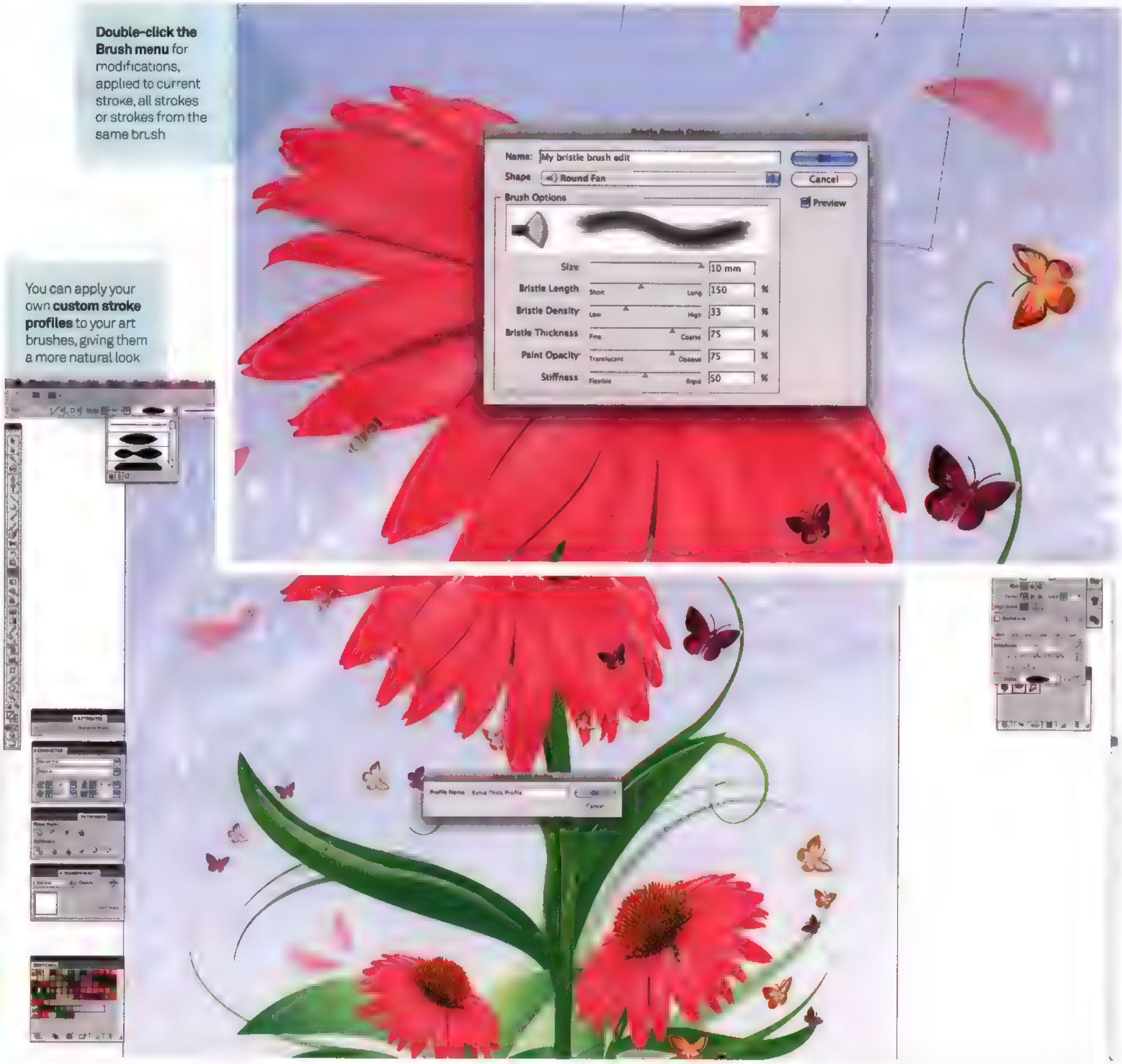
02___ You can see our saved Main Leaves and End Leaves components within the options above. The Pattern Brush will give you the option to assign each component to start, finish, outer and inner corners. Click on the boxes, one by one, and add your selection. If you find your Pattern Brush starts going in the wrong direction, go back to the main window and use the Flip options to change course.

03___ If you work with a drawing tablet, your results can be improved by applying extra pressure to the ends of your stroke. This will result in interesting pattern interactions and distortions in your artwork, which will give it a more natural look instead of the pattern looking solid and uniform throughout the stroke. As with normal strokes, you can adjust the width by changing the point width from the Stroke panel.

The pro's guide to…
Symbols and brushes

Double-click the Brush menu for modifications, applied to current stroke, all strokes or strokes from the same brush

You can apply your own **custom stroke profiles** to your art brushes, giving them a more natural look



Name: My bristle brush edit
Shape: Round Fan
Size: 10 mm
Bristle Length: 150 %
Bristle Density: 33 %
Bristle Thickness: 75 %
Paint Opacity: 75 %
Stiffness: 50 %

Profile Name: Extra Thick Profile

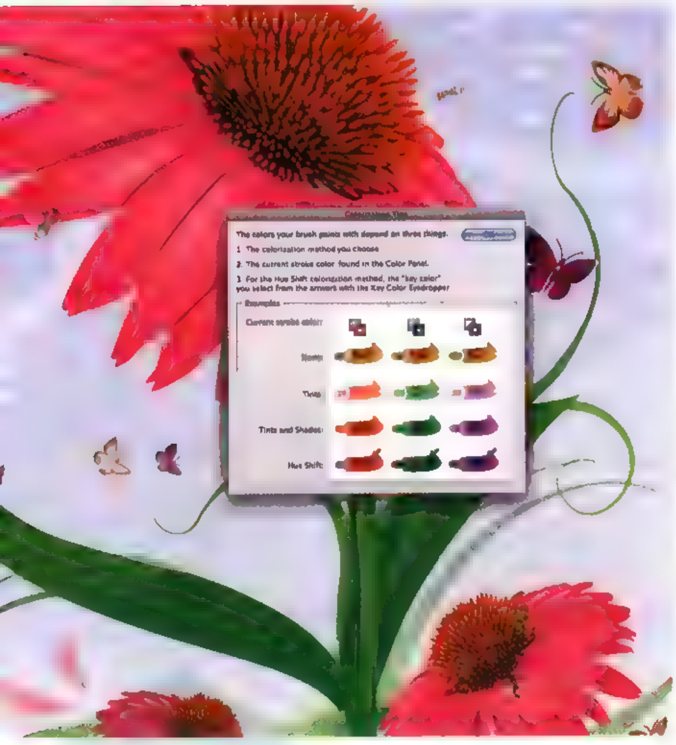
→ to Illustrator's features but it only works in one direction – either horizontally or vertically – at a time.

When working with symbols, there's also an option for object registration. When making a new symbol, the pop-up menu box offers the chance to set its origin point from the 9-point proxy. This will set a default origin point from which the symbol can be rotated. Since the symbols are a great shortcut for repetitive tasks, object registration quickly becomes a very convenient means of handling them. When you reset or replace symbols within your artwork, each new element will slot into its default position around the origin point. To do this, select your symbol within the artwork, and then select a new object to swap from the Reset drop-down menu. This will bring the symbol back to its original size.

Brushes are another element of Illustrator that often gets overlooked. They are another fantastic feature but, like Symbols, preset patterned borders can seem a little outdated. The Brush presets can seem confusing at first but once you get a look under the bonnet and start making your own, you'll soon start to appreciate this stellar feature.

The latest version of Illustrator includes an overhauled Art Brush, giving you additional options to stretch parts of the brush. Before this software tweak, artwork used to get distorted and could give some odd-looking results. There's also a new tool called Stretch Between Guides – you can place guides around an object, or part of an object, and stretch it. This is particularly useful when drawing flowers, trees or anything else with long stalks. Unfortunately, neither of these options work with complex paths or objects with gradient colours. They work best with simple patterns and distorted grunge-style strokes.

The Bristle Brush is great for creating transparent Photoshop-like layers. The addition of this brush stroke has enabled designers to draw in completely new but natural ways that were not possible before in Illustrator. If your artwork



Colorization Tips

The colors your brush paints with depend on three things:

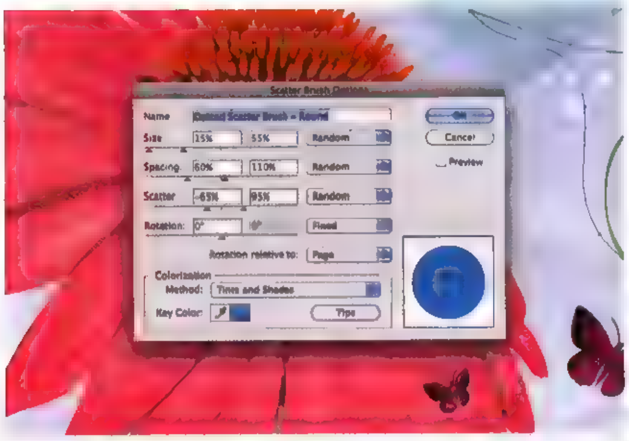
1 The colorization method you choose

2 The current stroke color found in the Color Panel.

3 For the Hue Shift colorization method, the "key color" you select from the artwork with the Key Color Eyedropper

You can **adjust Art Brush Guides** to the part of the brush that will be stretched with longer brush strokes

Experiment with various settings for each brush: these can be used to add additional depth to your artwork



Scatter Brush Options

Name: Dotted Scatter Brush – Round

Size: 15% 55% Random

Spacing: 60% 110% Random

Scatter: -65% 95% Random

Rotation: 0° Fixed

Rotation relative to: Page

Colorization Method: Tints and Shades

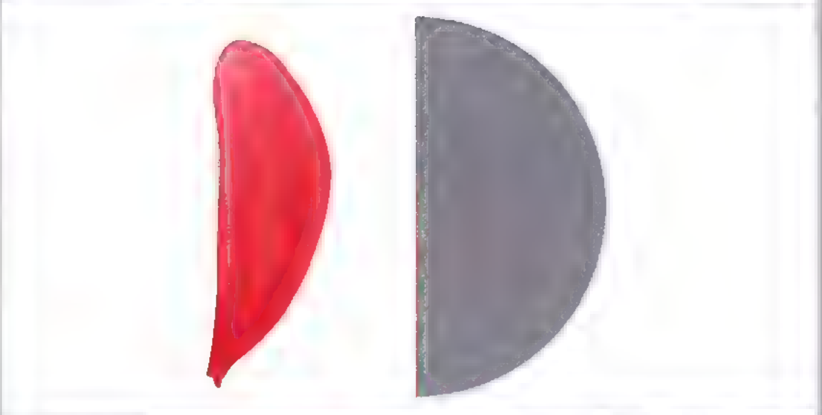
Key Color:

requires realistic breezy or dreamy textures, select the Bristle Brush library and choose a paintbrush type to suit your requirements. The brush will get automatically added to your current brush selection where you can modify the many options and make the opacity, thickness and density suit your artwork.

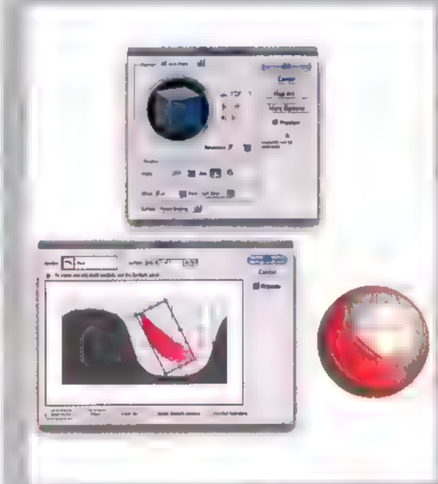
Finally, Variable Stroke Width (Shift+W) enables you to expand the expressive look of a brush stroke, while Art Brushes and Scatter Brushes can be tweaked in width to give them a more hand-drawn look and feel. There are countless options to achieve excellent results with these two features, to make sure you get the best possible impact from symbols and brushes.

Give your symbols a 3D twist

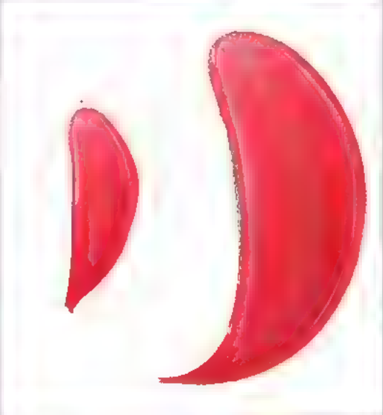
Save yourself time when adding depth and volume to your artwork by wrapping symbols around 3D objects



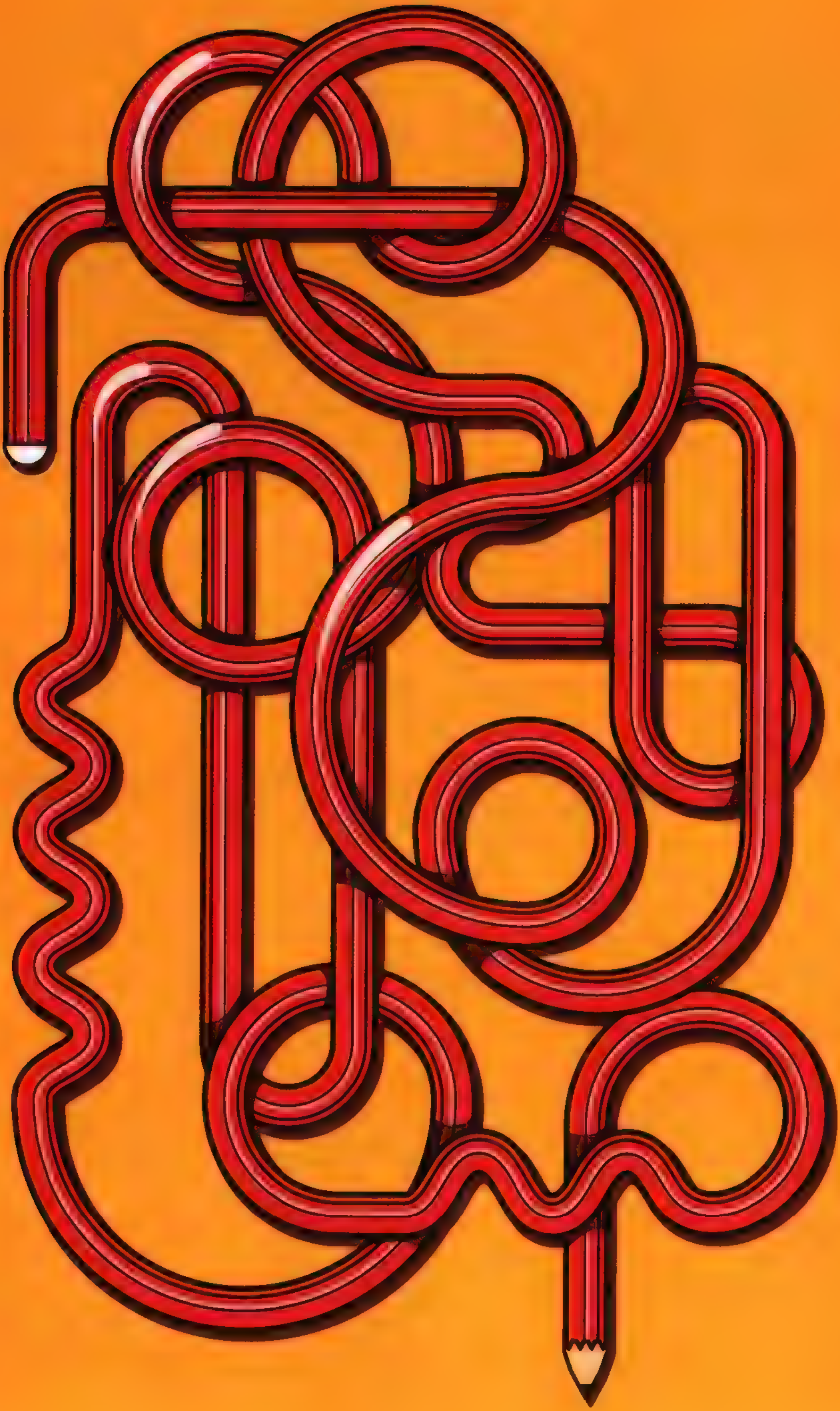
01___ The introduction of the basic 3D tools in Illustrator means you can apply symbols to multi-dimensional artwork as well as using the object to shape symbols in 3D. If you have created a new object but need it to have a more realistic, sculpted form, you can convert it to a symbol and wrap it around a supporting shape. For spherical objects, select half circles with the Revolve tool.



02___ Set your preferred options in the Revolve tool dialogue, and the half circle will become a 3D sphere. Go to the Map Art option to add the symbol of your choice – a petal in this example. The Map Art menu options enable you to move the symbol around the object path. Turn Preview on to see how it interacts with the 3D object – it's always worth devoting a bit of extra time when using this option as it can really affect the quality of the results.



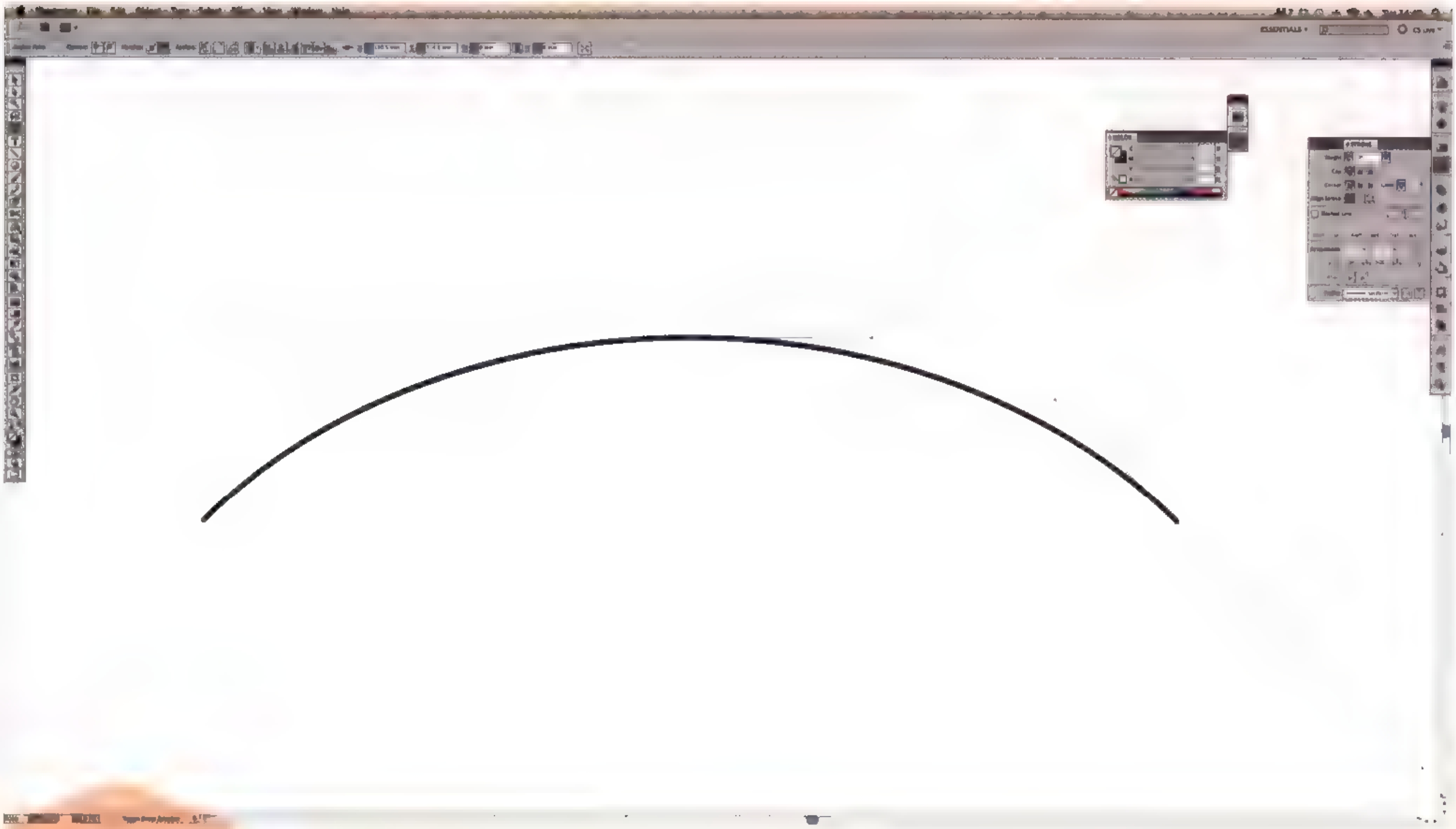
03___ After you have found the right angle and position for the object, select No Shading from the Surface options. This will then remove the background colour from the sphere. Next, Expand the object and remove everything but the main object – in this instance, the petal – by using the Direct Selection tool. Once finished, you will be left with just the main object but in a more interesting shape, which will look much more in-place floating in the overall artwork.



The pro's guide to

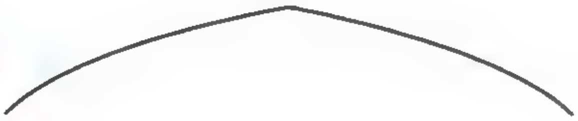
BEZIER CURVES AND PATHS

Take tighter control of the basic building blocks of Illustrator to streamline your workflow and improve your linework



Natural curves can be achieved by drawing points with equal distances between the handles

Use the Convert Anchor Point tool to split handles and let each one work independently from the other, **so you can create angles**

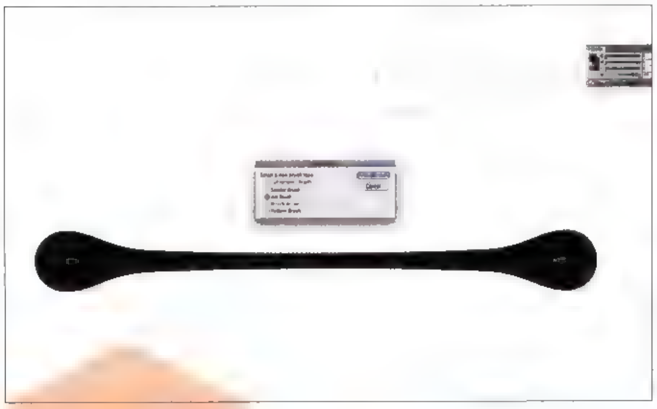


Illustrator has such a wealth of features in its arsenal that it's easy to pick and choose the tools that are suited to your needs without ever knowing the others. The exception to this way of thinking is paths: without them you might as well pack up and forget about it. Whether open-ended or joined, every line you draw connecting two points is a path, and every single shape in every image consists of paths.

Essential to most complicated path shapes are Bézier curves. Popularised by French mathematician and engineer Pierre Bézier in the late 1950s and early 60s, a Bézier curve is essentially a mathematical formula that calculates the path a curve takes from point A to point B. It can be used to draw an infinite number of different shapes, and Illustrator's Pen tool takes full advantage of this system. The benefits over using raster images include infinite scalability and vastly reduced file sizes, making Bézier curves a popular choice – especially among those looking for a slick, smooth finish to their work.

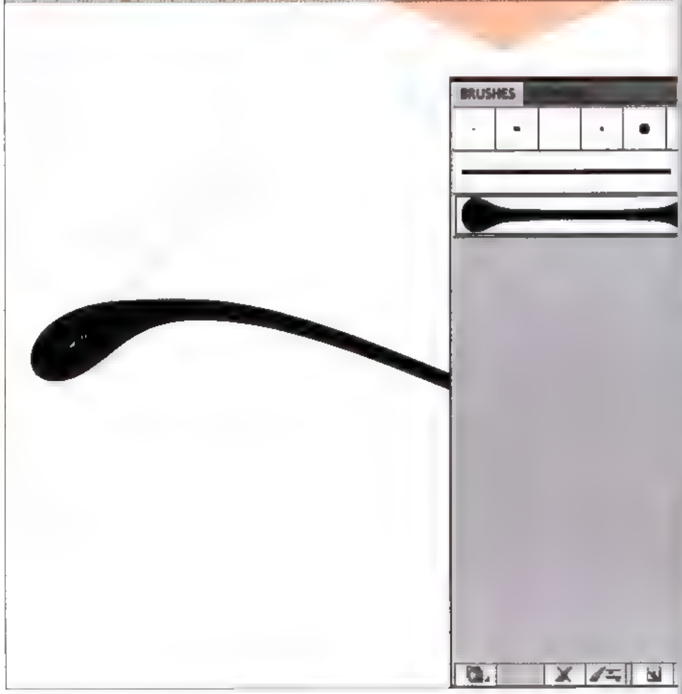
While the actual process of drawing curves and paths is very simple, it can take practice to master – but we can use some basic principles to help us draw better and smoother shapes. Firstly, if you're going to be spending a lot of time with the Pen tool, get into the habit of using your keyboard as an aid to speed up your workflow. For example, when you're just about to start drawing, choose the Direct Selection tool (A) before selecting the Pen tool: you can then switch quickly between the two by holding Ctrl/Cmd, making handle-editing a much simpler and faster process. Another keyboard tip is to hold the Spacebar and click-and-hold the mouse when you create an anchor point: this enables you to freely move that point around, making sure you get your positioning just right first time.

Getting to know your way around the keyboard allows for a much more streamlined workflow. It's a good idea to get into the habit of switching between the mouse and keyboard as you go, rather than drawing roughly and then having to fix the curves later. Use Shift when drawing a point to constrain the handles to 45-degree angles – this is especially useful in situations when your shapes need to be consistent, such as when you're drawing type. Holding Alt/Opt selects the Convert Anchor Point tool, which



To create **a custom brush that can be applied to a path**, just draw your desired shape then drag it onto the Brushes palette

You can **create your curves and apply the brush**, using a variety of options in the Brushes dialogue box



enables you to instantly create a sharp angle or move two handles off at conflicting angles.

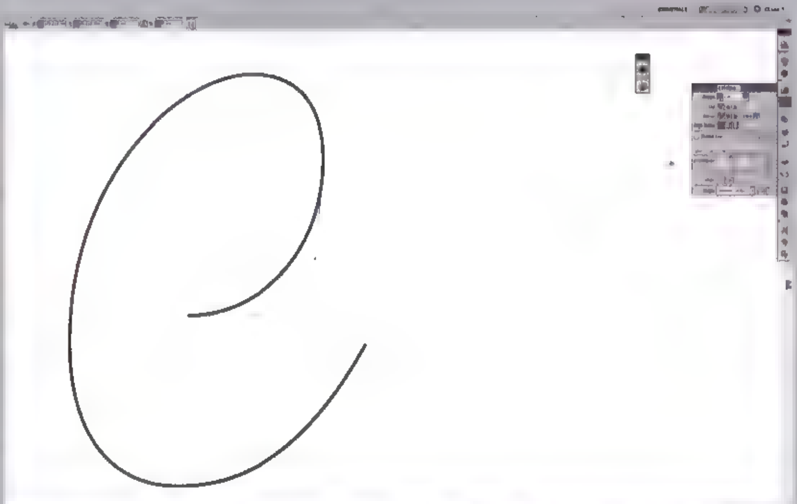
Additionally, you can use the Scissors tool (C) to cut the path at any point, as well as add and delete points at any time (the + and - keys respectively). Used properly, these shortcuts will improve your Bézier curves dramatically.

An often overlooked part of drawing with curves is the ability to apply brushes to a single weight line. In part, Adobe has made this process easier lately by including some basic profile shapes to the Stroke options, but you can easily create your own to give you greater control over the look of a particular line. Let's say you want to draw a line with rounded ends that tapers to a finer weight in the centre. Simply draw that shape first and drag it to your Brushes palette to create a new art brush. Now you can apply it to any line you draw, giving it an individual appearance.

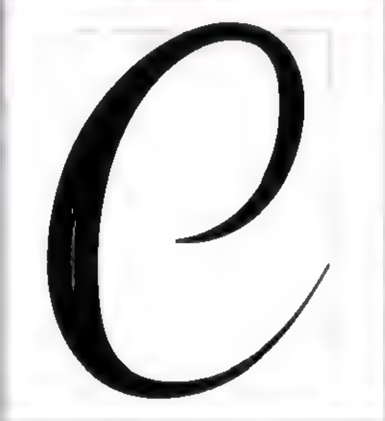
The Blend Options dialogue is another useful feature for paths in Illustrator. Simply draw two paths and Illustrator will connect them in stages depending on the parameters you supply. You can blend lines by a defined amount of steps, or by a

Add character with the Width tool

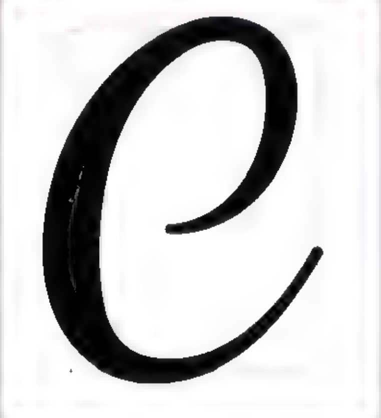
Control and alter the weight of a line at any point with this handy and easy-to-use tool



01___ A good way to add character to a line is by using Illustrator's new Width tool. This enables you to alter the weight of a line at any point along its length with great control, and is ideal for drawing flourishes or casual scripts where significant variation in weight is desirable. To begin, draw your path in a single weight – in this case, a lowercase script 'e' glyph.



02___ Click on the Width tool and click-and-drag on the line to alter its width at the appropriate parts. You don't need to stick to the anchor points that you drew originally, just alter the places where you feel the line needs work.



03___ In the Stroke options, click to select a rounded cap so that your letter finishes with a natural, rounded edge, rather than a harsh cut. Then, once again use the Width tool to adjust the cap until you're happy.

Five pro tips

1/ Divide Objects Below

[illegible]

2/ Snap to Point

[illegible]

3/ Simplify paths

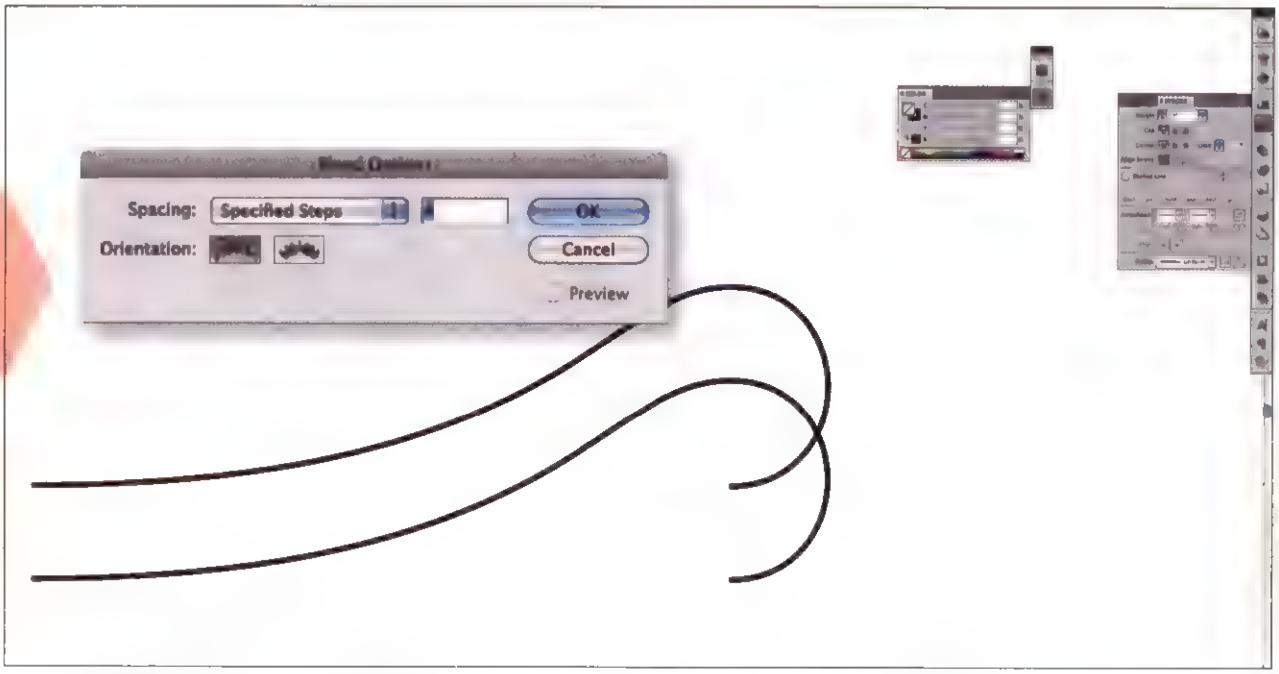
[illegible]

4/ Connect paths

[illegible]

5/ Make a sunburst

[illegible]



Blend Options

Spacing: Specified Steps

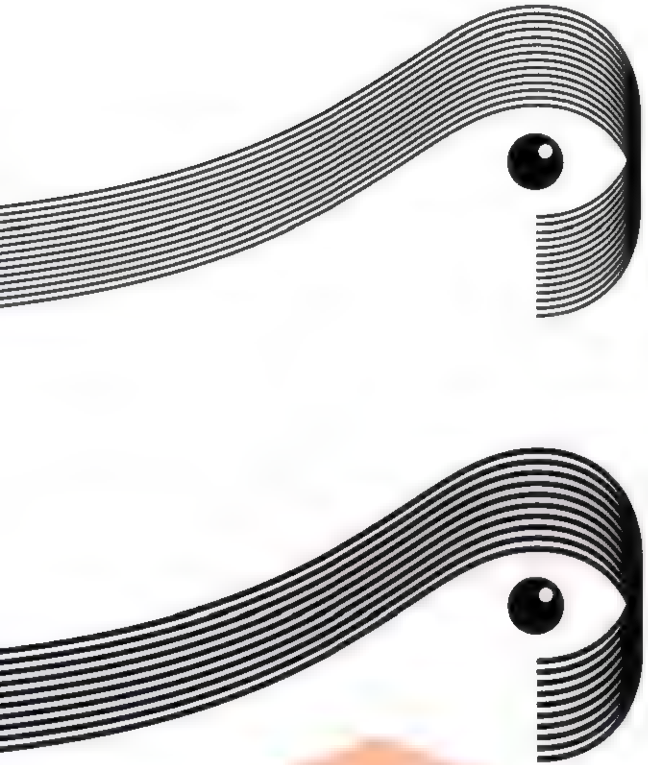
By drawing a curved line and duplicating it, you can blend the two together and **Illustrator will fill in the steps for you**

specified distance between each blend element. You can also blend colour, as well as different stroke thicknesses. Let's say you've created a logo that uses a blended wavy line as part of the identity, and you require that same marque at varying sizes for print and digital. You can easily edit the thickness and amount of steps in the blend to enhance clarity at smaller sizes without changing the essence of the identity. In addition, this technique is also great for creating shading effects in illustration projects, both as a stylistic element and for work that will have print restrictions – a screenprint project, for example – as it enables you to imply depth without using any tints of colour.

When drawing curves, practice makes perfect. However, there are a few tips to bear in mind that will set you on the right road. As a rule, make sure you use as few anchor points as possible. There is a different school of thought that works on the principle that more points allows for more control – and to an extent this is true – however, more points also increase the chance of rogue kinks appearing in a curve and creating an amateurish or clumsy overall look. The fewer points in a curve, the smoother its appearance: the trick is to know where to place each point to get the best result. To this end, get into the habit of clicking and dragging your first anchor point. This gives the first point a handle that you can take advantage of right away, rather than relying on the next anchor point to do all the work. Next, when drawing a series of anchor points, try to make the distance of the handle from the path as close as possible to its preceding counterpart. This creates a harmony between the two points with no aggressive changes of direction, and will help achieve a more balanced, flowing look in the overall piece.

Another tip for clean curve-drawing is to use Shift on your keyboard extensively. By keeping your handles flowing across horizontal and vertical lines in the main (there will be natural exceptions), you can ensure that a consistent look runs through the whole piece. It's a bit like using a limited colour scheme to colour a piece – if you don't stray too far away from the basics you'll keep things uniform.

Don't be afraid to use the other drawing tools to help achieve your goal. The Ellipse tool (L) will draw a much better circle



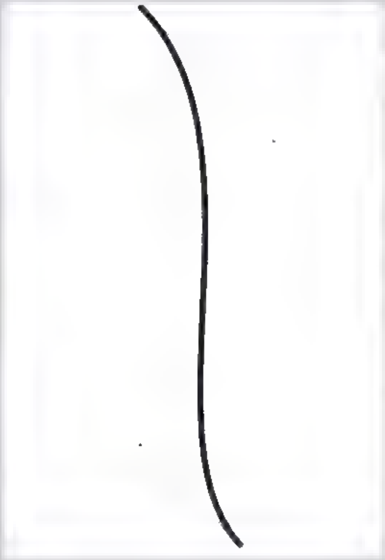
Using this expert technique, you can **optimise logos or images** for different uses and screen resolutions

or oval than you can in no time at all, so if you need a perfect circle as part of your shape, use the right tool for the job, then cut the parts you don't need with the Scissors tool and join it to the rest of your path.

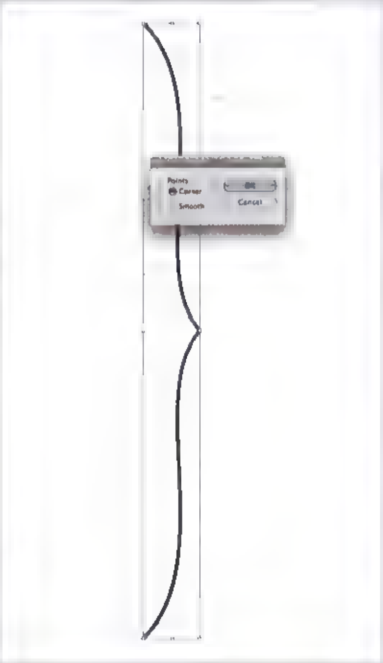
Lastly, when drawing new points where the line will change direction – for example, on a wave – add your points where the path changes direction, not midway on the curve itself, which creates subtle kinks. Clicking to add on the directional change produces a far more natural curve.

Construct the perfect curve

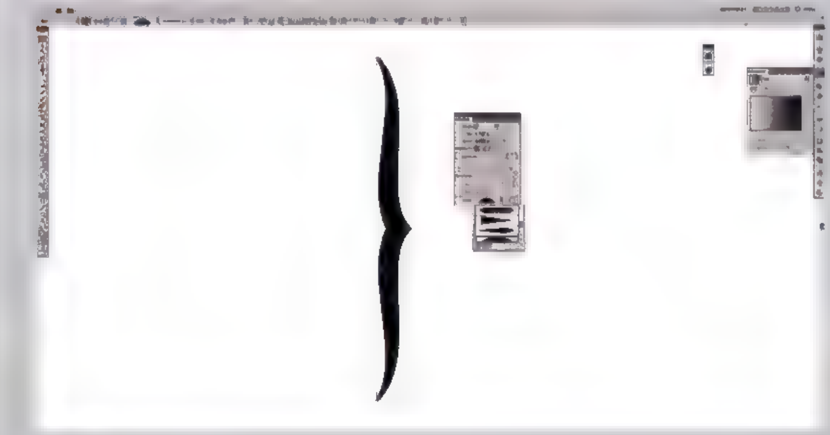
Master the art of drawing beautifully smooth curves with ease – every time



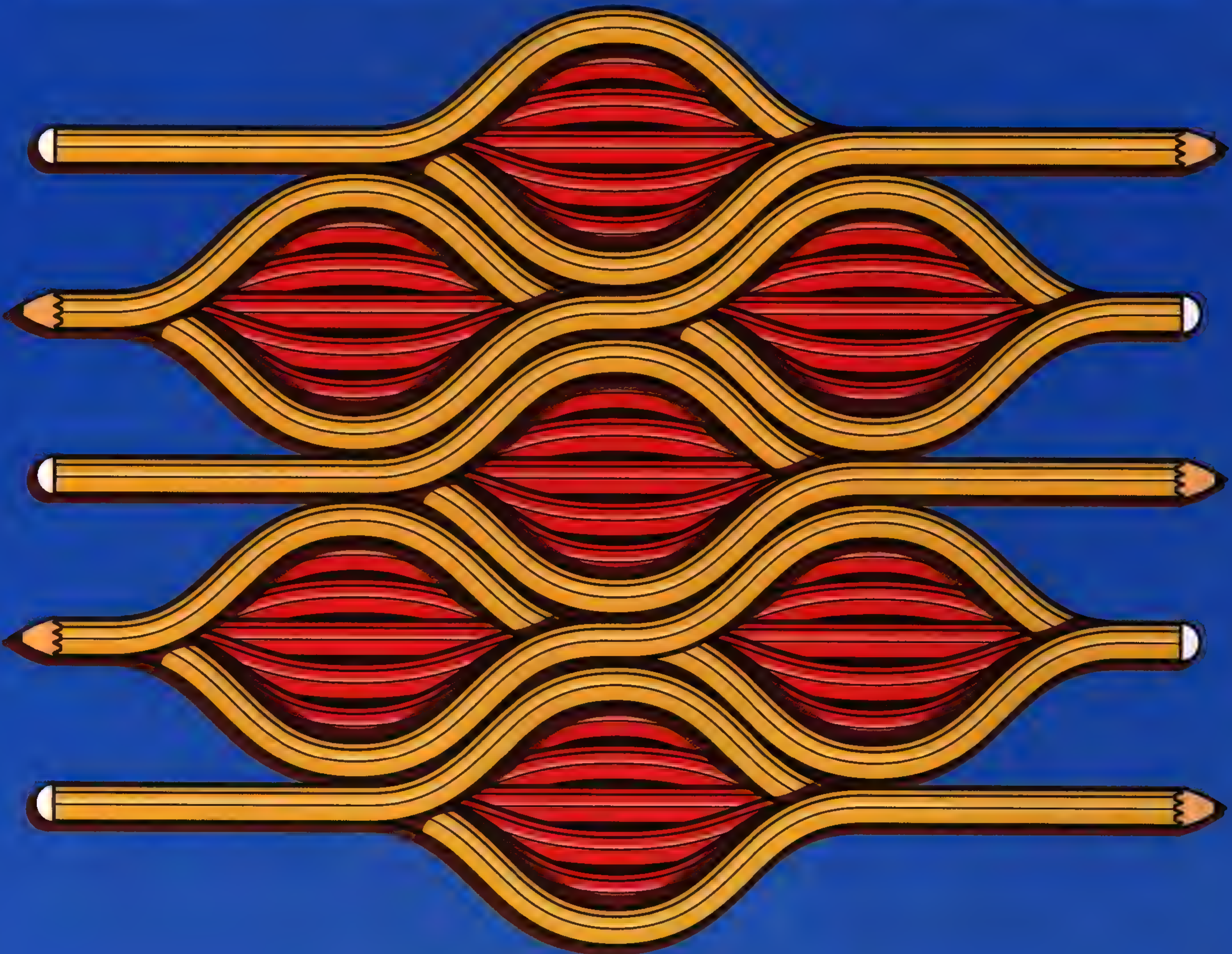
01 Knowing exactly where to position your points is key to good curve-drawing, so here are a few tips. Let's create our own custom brace (or curly bracket). Click-and-drag your first point to create a handle for better control, holding down Shift to constrain it to a 45-degree angle. Draw your next point below and slightly to the right, and once again hold Shift to constrain the angle of the handle.



02 Next, you need to copy and paste your wave in place, then use the Reflect tool (O) to flip it vertically. Line up the points using Snap to Point, and then select the two overlapping points and hit Ctrl/Cmd+J to join them together into one path.

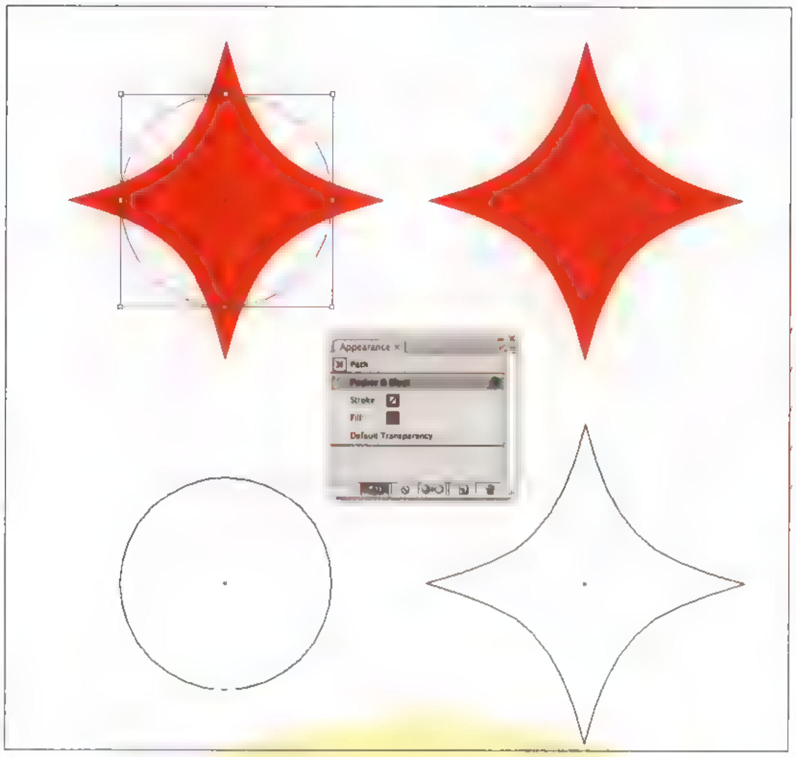


03 To finish, increase the weight of the line and choose Width Profile 6 from the Profile options in the Stroke palette. You can use these same principles to construct much larger and more involved shapes, letters and logos.

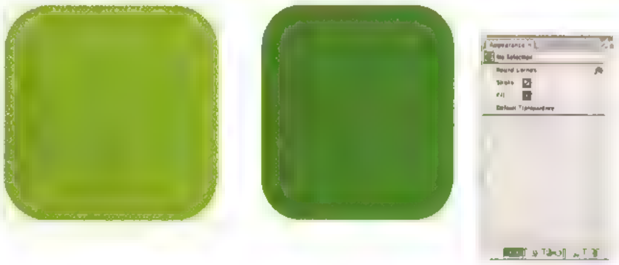


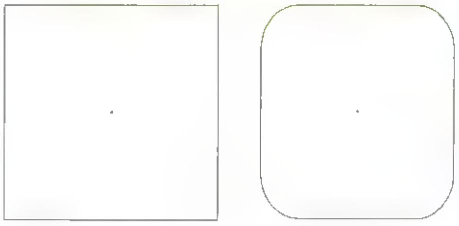
The pro's guide to
EFFECTS

By fully utilising the Effects menu you can free up time by adding depth and texture in a versatile, non-destructive way



The Effects menu enables you to **adjust the settings and appearance of each object independently**, whereas filters change the structure of the shape it is applied to





Effects and filters **appear identical** until you look at the Appearance palette or the Outline view

Five pro tips

1/ Expand objects and effects

[redacted]

2/ Live Trace

[redacted]

3/ Easy blur effects

[redacted]

4/ [redacted]

[redacted]

5/ Transform effect

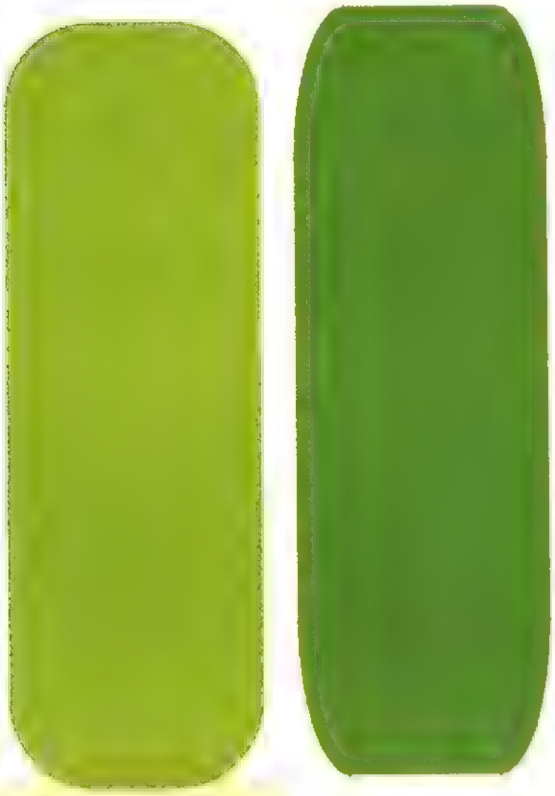
[redacted]

One of the most underrated and unused features of Illustrator is, without a doubt, its Effects menu. Many designers, despite using the software every day, are unaware of how powerful a tool this feature can be. Even if you consider yourself proficient in Illustrator, over the following pages we'll walk through a selection of expert tips and tricks that will enable you to save time and work more efficiently, letting Illustrator do the hard work so you can concentrate on the overall vision of your designs instead of being forced to spend hours on the actual implementation. We shall be covering various techniques throughout this guide, ranging from how to apply effects to vector objects to change their appearance, to producing textures that are 100 per cent scalable and vector-based.

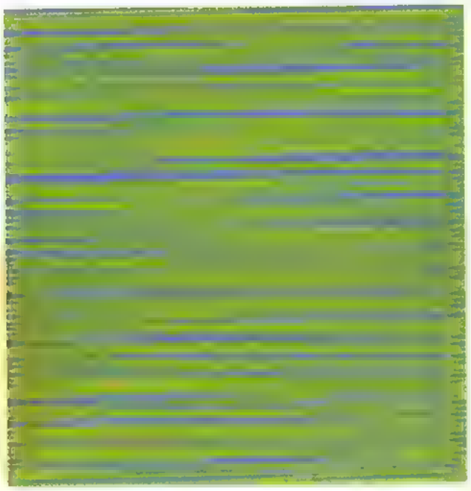
Even if you've been using Illustrator for many years, it's still possible to learn new things every day. The secret is to continue experimenting with its ever-increasing plethora of tools, finding new ways to speed up your daily workflow and increase your productivity and your output.

Firstly, why use the Effects menu? Why not use filters or use the Pen tool to draw the shape you need? Essentially, a filter will alter the underlying structure of the path or shape it is applied to, whereas the different effects only change the appearance of the shape. Effects can be edited and deleted, and multiple effects can be applied to a single shape. These can also be saved and loaded into a custom library in the Graphic Styles palette, which we will explore later.

The filter changes the structure of the shape it is applied to, as you can see in the example at the top left. The Pucker & Bloat effect (Effect>Distort & Transform) has been applied to the ellipse shape on the left, and the Pucker & Bloat filter (Filter>Distort) to the one on the right. At first glance the two shapes may look identical. However, now look at the two



Effects will **scale with the proportions of the shape** they are applied to



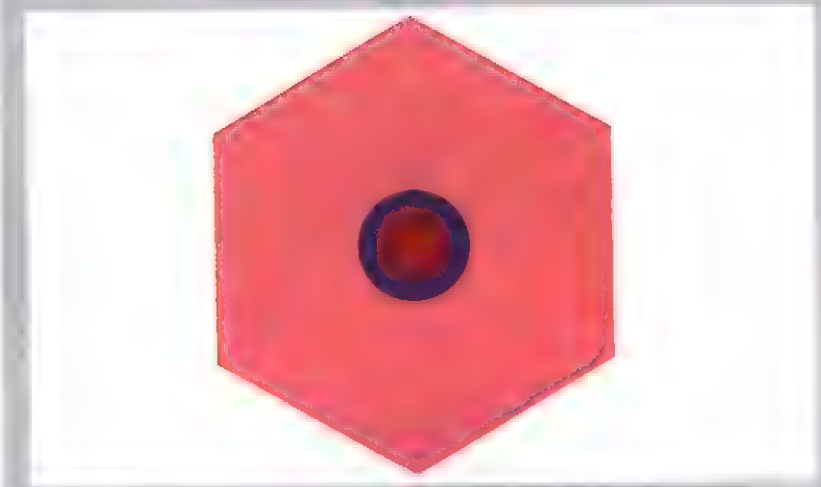
Graphic styles can be great for **applying the same treatment to more than one shape** more quickly and easily

shapes in Outline View (Ctrl/Cmd+Y) and you can see that the object with the effect applied to it is still an ellipse – just with an effect applied to its appearance – whereas the ellipse on the right, the one with the filter applied to it, has been turned into a new shape. If you look in the Appearance palette you can see how effects are applied and you can duplicate an effect, add a new one or delete it.

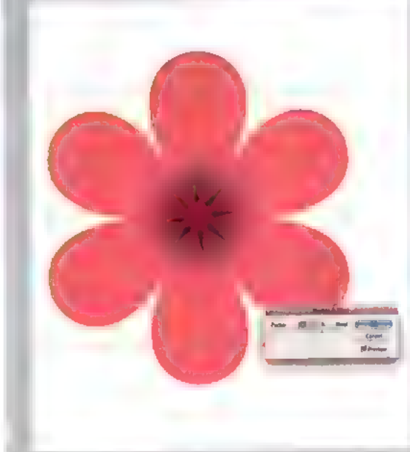
Once you've mastered how the effects work, it's time to start using them to your advantage. The Round Corners effect is an essential design tool. It can help add uniformity to a series of shapes, and can be edited at any time so it is much more convenient to use than drawing the shapes using the Rounded Rectangle tool, for example. If you compare two objects – one, a rectangle with Rounded Edges applied to it (light green); and the second drawn using the Rounded Rectangle tool with the same corner radius (dark green) – you will see, again, that they

Graphic elements using effects

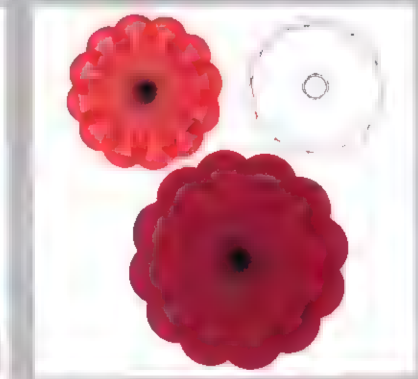
Utilise the Effects menu to create striking elements with a few easy steps



01____ You can create elements within a few easy steps by utilising the power of the Effects menu. To create these flowers, first draw a polygon and give it a colour of your choice. This will form the basis of your petals. Draw a small ellipse in the centre of the polygon, and then an even smaller one. Colours aren't an issue at this stage, as we are just drawing the basics of each shape.

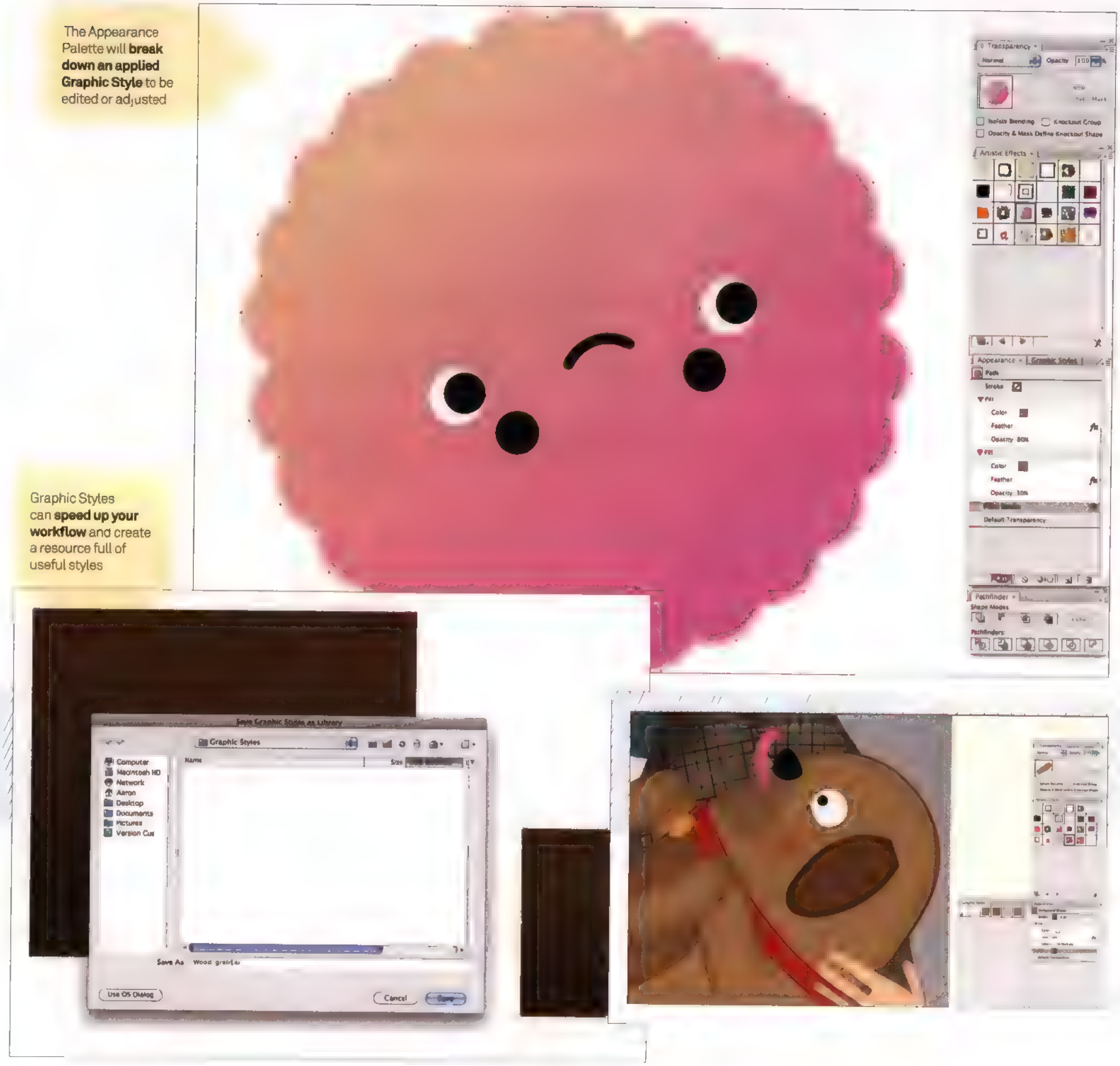


02____ With the large polygon selected, go to Effect>Distort & Transform. Apply a Pucker & Bloat effect to it with around 62% Bloat and you should end up with a six-petaled flower. Apply a Gaussian Blur to the larger ellipse, and another Pucker & Bloat effect for the smaller ellipse in the centre, this time at -81%. Duplicate and rotate this to form the stamen.



03____ Now it's a matter of personal preference: adjust the colours and layer styles to suit the look you are after. Here the stamen is set to Multiply and the colours tweaked slightly. For the outer petals, an Inner Glow has been added (Effect>Stylize>Inner Glow), as well as a subtle texture, and the transparency adjusted. The shape was then duplicated and rotated, with both set to Multiply, which helps them 'pop'. You can see how the effects look in Outline View (Ctrl/Cmd+Y).

The pro's guide to... Effects



The Appearance Palette will **break down an applied Graphic Style** to be edited or adjusted

Graphic Styles can **speed up your workflow** and create a resource full of useful styles

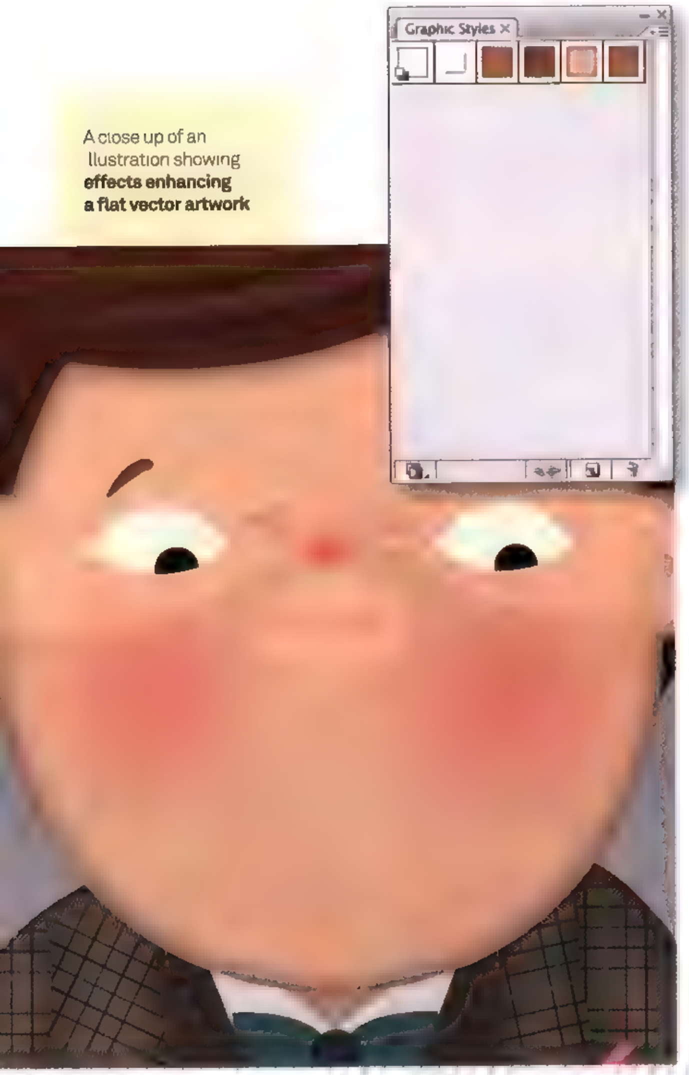
→ initially look identical. Until you look at the objects in Outline View, that is, as before, or attempt to stretch or alter the size of the object using the Selection tool. In the screenshot (page 39) you can see how the object has been distorted, compared to the one that has an effect applied to it, which remains in proportion and accurate.

Effects can be used to make drawing objects simple. For example, if you wanted to create a bicycle wheel with some roughness added to it, rather than keeping the tyre as an ellipse with a 2pt stroke, the Pucker & Bloat effect can be used. However, be sure to experiment with the settings as even the slightest adjustment can alter the appearance of an object.

Graphic styles are similar to layer styles in Photoshop They enable you to save a collection of effects as a style that can be used over and over again – the perfect resource for speeding up your workflow. To access the Graphic Styles palette, go to Window>Graphic Styles. The palette opens with a small set of default styles. You can apply graphic styles by first selecting an object (or objects), and then clicking the chosen style in the Graphic Styles palette. To replace the graphic style on an object with another style, simply click on a new one.

To load a set of graphic styles, choose Open Graphic Style Library from the fly-out menu, and pick any library from the pop-up menu – the examples shown here have artistic effects applied. A new palette will appear with the new library, and you can now apply any style from the new library that you've just opened, and it will be added to your Graphic Styles palette. Once you've created a new style that you want to save, simply drag the object into the Graphic Styles palette, then choose Save Graphic Styles from the fly out menu.

Graphic styles are very effective for applying the same treatments to more than one shape in a very short amount of



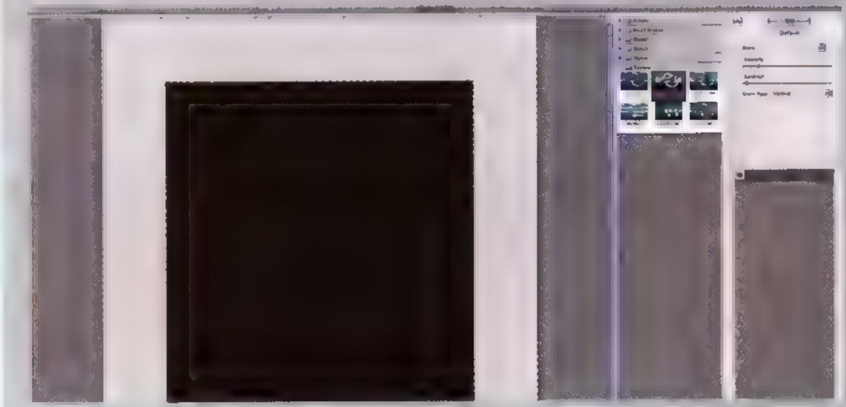
A close up of an illustration showing **effects enhancing a flat vector artwork**

time. You can use them in illustrations that require the same stroke, a fill or some effects such as inner glow and textures. If you were to apply these separately to each shape it would be very time consuming.

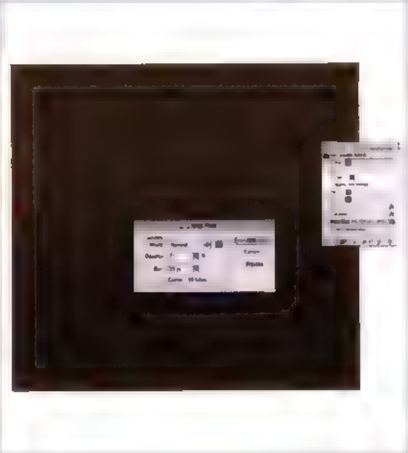
Illustrator's Effects menu is bursting with different treatments for your work. We've covered some of the important functions, techniques and creative applications here, all of which can be used to make your workflow more efficient. However, experimentation is key to learning about all the options available and really speeding up your ways of working, so explore and see how much time you can save.

Apply a textured wood-grain effect

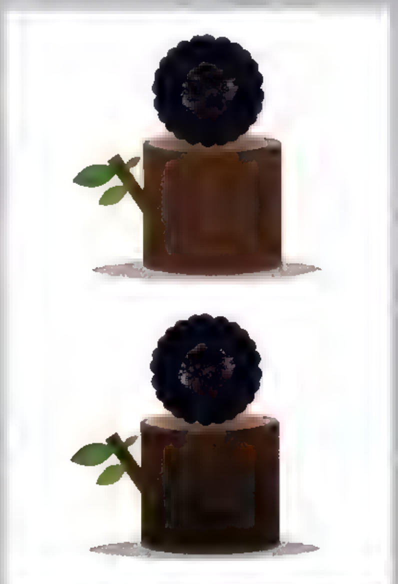
Add depth and interest to you illustration projects by making the most of Illustrator's built-in textures



01 A realistic wood grain effect can be very difficult to achieve. However, applying Illustrator's texture effects can add extra realism to flat-looking vector work. You could scan in some textures or import a wooden texture into your document and run Live Trace, but sometimes the details are lost with these methods – usually the textures are converted and appear messy and too 'digital'. Simply select your object, go to Effect>Texture>Grain and explore the settings.



02 Remember that you can adjust the transparency of an effect in the Transparency palette, alongside layer effects and fills. Here, two different types of textures and various fills for the object have been applied, as well as an Inner Glow. There is no right and wrong here – everyone has a different creative eye. Once you're happy with the treatments that you've applied, drag the shape to the Graphic Styles palette and save it for use in future projects.



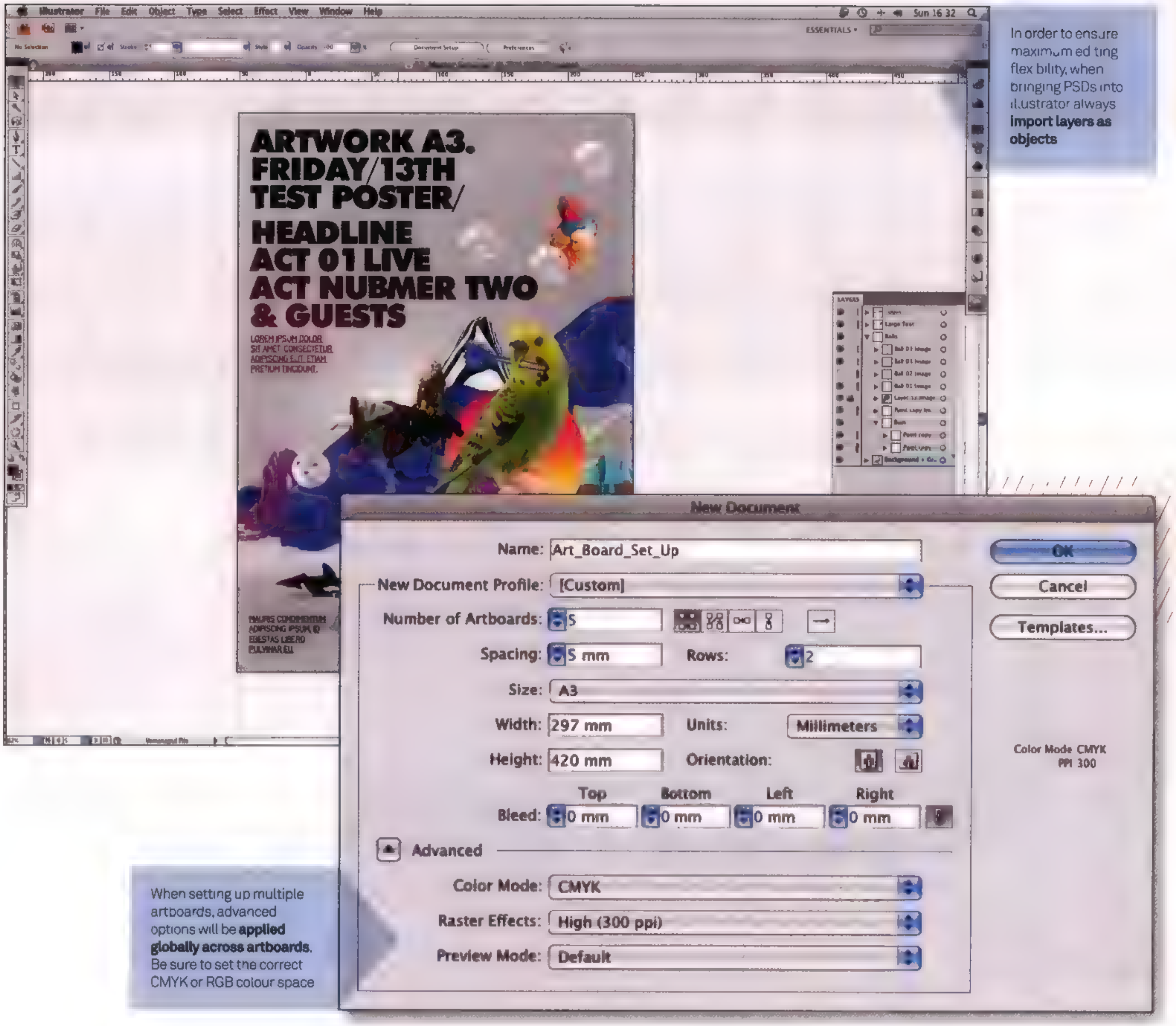
03 This wood grain style can be applied to objects whenever you need it. In the example used here, you can see how it helps tie up the illustration. The beauty of graphic styles is the ability to apply, edit and remove them without affecting the original object.

The pro's guide to

ARTBOARDS AND GRIDS

Master Illustrator's improved artboard capabilities and speed up your workflow on complex multi-part projects

The pro's guide to…
Artboards and grids


Illustrator File Edit Object Type Select Effect View Window Help
Sun 16 32
ESSENTIALS
No Selection
Document Setup
Preferences
ARTWORK A3.
FRIDAY/13TH
TEST POSTER/
HEADLINE
ACT 01 LIVE
ACT NUBMER TWO
& GUESTS
LOREM IPSUM DOLOR
SIT AMET CONSECTETUR
ADIPISCING ELIT. ETIAM
PRETIUM TINCIDUNT.
MAURIS CONDIMENTUM
ADIPISCING IPSUM, ID
EGESTAS LIBERO
PULVINAR EU.
LAYERS
OK
Cancel
Templates...

New Document

Name: Art_Board_Set_Up

New Document Profile: [Custom]

Number of Artboards: 5

Spacing: 5 mm Rows: 2

Size: A3

Width: 297 mm Units: Millimeters

Height: 420 mm Orientation:

Bleed: Top 0 mm Bottom 0 mm Left 0 mm Right 0 mm

Advanced

Color Mode: CMYK

Raster Effects: High (300 ppi)

Preview Mode: Default

Color Mode CMYK
PPI 300

In order to ensure maximum editing flexibility, when bringing PSDs into Illustrator always **import layers as objects**

When setting up multiple artboards, advanced options will be **applied globally across artboards.** Be sure to set the correct CMYK or RGB colour space

The artboard has come a long way from simply being the region containing your printable artwork. Developments in its functionality were first introduced in CS4, one of the most notable being the addition of multiple artboards for streamlining your workflow. You can now have up to 100 artboards of various sizes within a single Illustrator project.

Multiple artboards can can help quicken the workflow for projects that would have otherwise involved creating multiple documents or unorganised stacked layers. Some of the practical applications include multiple-page PDFs, printed pages with different sizes or different elements, such as a stationery set and separate elements for websites and video storyboards.

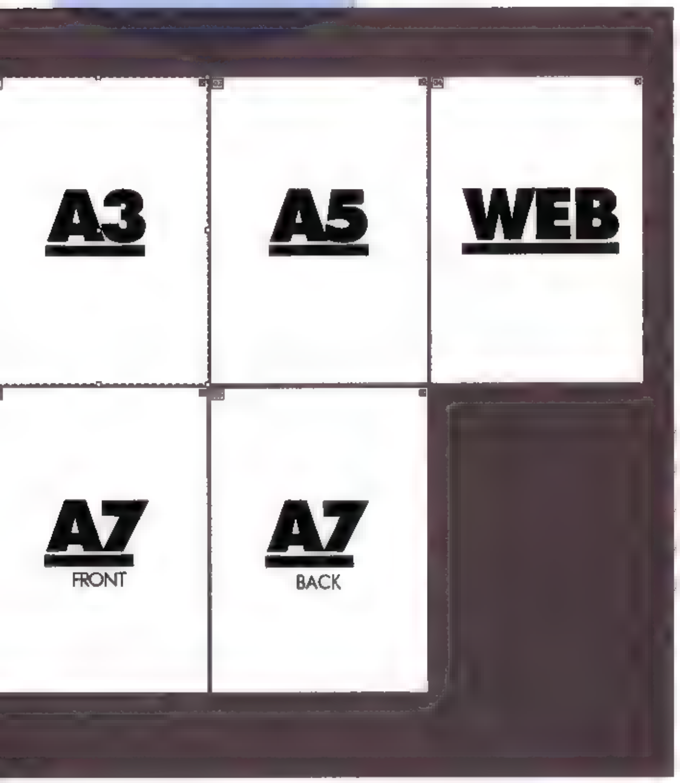
You'll be given the option to set up multiple artboards when you create a new project. In the dialogue box you can set the number of individual artboards you wish to have, the spacing between them, how many rows and also the flow. For example, a left-to-right flow would be most suitable for a storyboard, whereas a vertical scroll would be more suited to a book layout.

The initial width and height will be set universally across all of your artboards. In this one document, the size isn't fixed and individual artboards in your project can be scaled and resized on demand as you work.

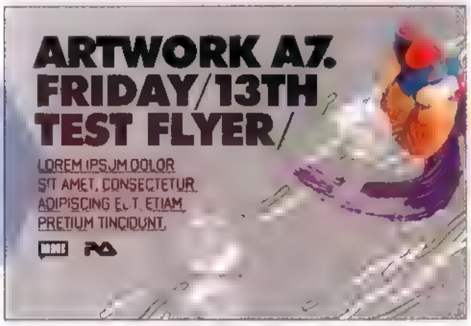
Often when designing a campaign you'll find yourself having to recreate your artwork in various shapes and sizes for output upon a variety of media, and this is where multiple artboards can come in handy. For example, if you were creating a poster and flyer campaign at four different sizes, you could design it across four separate artboards.

In this case, it would be a good idea to create the initial poster in Photoshop at A3 at the largest size first to avoid any unnecessary upscaling in your master objects as this will lead to pixelation and poor quality in the print reproduction. Once you have created your key poster design in photoshop, tidy and flatten the layers into the main design elements of your artwork and name each layer sequentially and correctly for clarity.

For design fluency each artboard within your document has the **same behaviours** as a standard single artboard



Use Cmd+0 to **fit the selected artboard to the screen**, useful if you're zooming out frequently

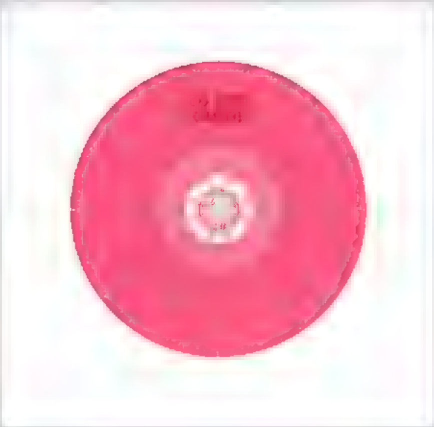


Then set up one artboard for each format needed. Manually resize each of them to the required size, including the required bleed area. For example, an A5 148.5x210mm flyer artboard would become 154.5x216mm inclusive of bleed. The width and height data for each artboard can be edited in the W: and H: fields in the Artboard tool bar across the top of your screen (situated below the menu tabs). If you wanted to design a web banner format, set up the size correctly by switching to using pixels in the rulers.

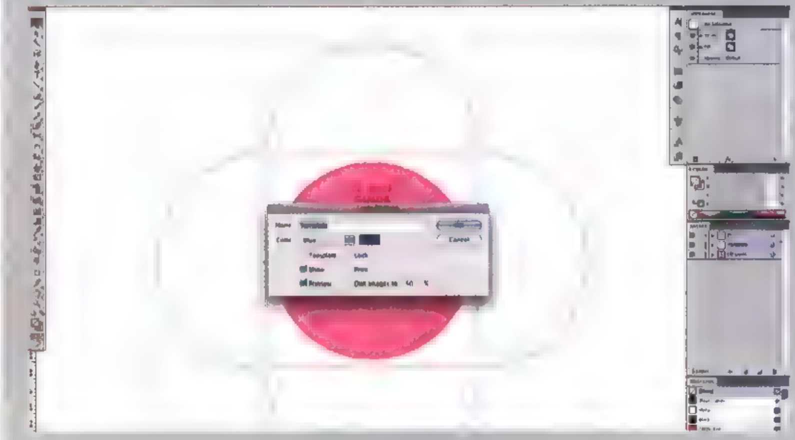
Once the artboards have been correctly formatted, add guides to denote where the bleed area is. Guides can also be added to denote text safe areas. These are required so that text isn't placed too close to the edge of the page during the duplication and scaling process. A larger text safe area must be left on the smaller sized print.

If you are using key Photoshop artwork then it should be imported into the first artboard. When importing the artwork check the 'Convert Layers to Objects' button on the Import →

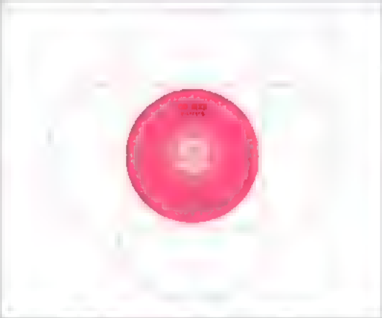
Create a packaging template using guides and paths



01___ When designing packaging templates from scratch, it's always good to initially set up a large artboard. This allows more flexibility, since adding a structural support fold, gluing tabs or a fold-out page can easily double the size of the packaging template you're working on. Start your design by drawing your CD disc size in Illustrator to the exact measurements. Add guides around the CD, leaving a 3mm clearance area for the disc to sit within.

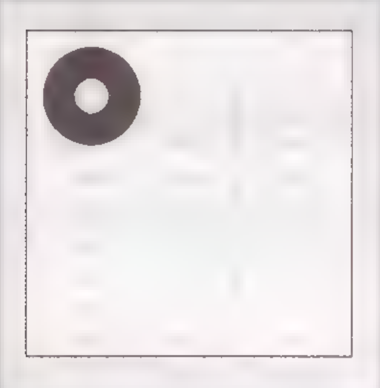


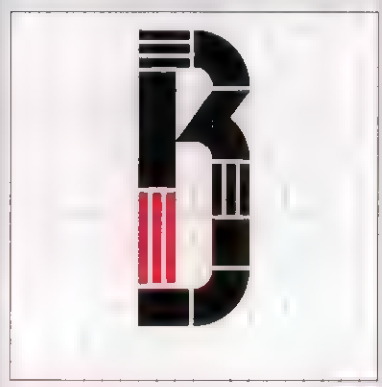
02___ Using the guides you have created as an initial starting point, draw the packaging shape you require. The outer shape seen here will become the die-cut line. It's always advisable to print a mock-up at 100 per cent actual size to ensure everything fits correctly. To make millimetre-perfect adjustments to your guides use the X + Y value fields at the top of the page, adding a +3 or -3 after the value in the box to move the guides back or along 3mm on the artboard. This is ideal for working out bleed and type safe areas.



03___ Next add a 3mm bleed around the edge of the packaging by selecting the outer dieline. Copy it and paste it in place (Ctrl/Cmd+F). Select the line and go to Effect>Path>Offset Path. A dialogue box will appear. Set your offset within it to 3mm. This will provide you with a guide for your 3mm bleed area. Expand the appearance on this line, then right-click/Ctrl-click and select Make Guides.

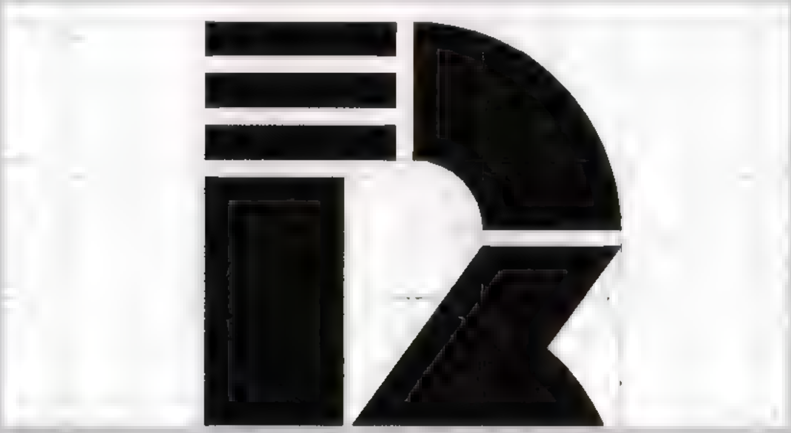
Design a geometric display face using two-tier guides



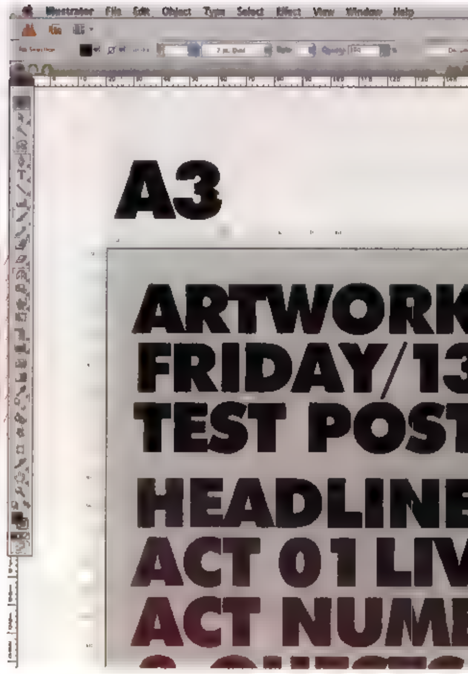


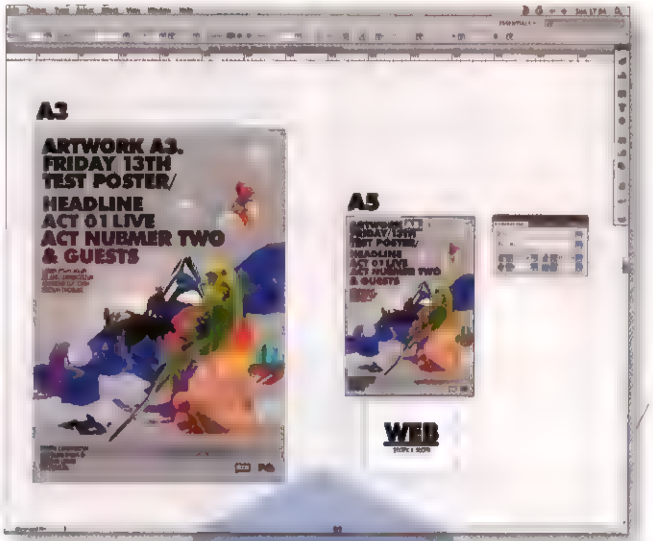
01___ Start by creating a new artboard measuring 200x200mm. Once your artboard is created go to Illustrator>Preferences>Guides and Grids. A dialogue box should appear. Set every grid line to 10mm and check the 'Grids in Back' box. For your document, rulers and grid lines should all be set in millimetres. Next add a new layer and show grids (Ctrl/Cmd+") Name the new layer 'Guides 01' and draw a circle on it with a hole punched out of the centre with the Pathfinder tool. Align the size of the inner and outer circles to the grid.

02___ Duplicate this circle across and down the canvas, all the time keeping it locked and aligned with the grid. These circles will form the basic underlying structure of your geometric display face. Once all the circles are positioned correctly, turn the objects into guides (View>Guides>Make Guides). These will now form the second grid in your two-tier grid/guide system. Hide and show this layer to turn these guides on and off. On a new layer use the relevant drawing tools to design glyphs for your new typeface.



03___ Turn on the Snap to Grid/Guides function while drawing the characters, as this will keep all your lines and points aligned correctly. Once the basic structure of your character is built, further detail can be added. Do this by breaking your main underlying grid up into even subdivisions. Use these as a guide when adding additional flourishes to your glyph. To add subdivisions click Illustrator>Preferences>Guides and Grids and add the number of divisions required in the Subdivisions field.

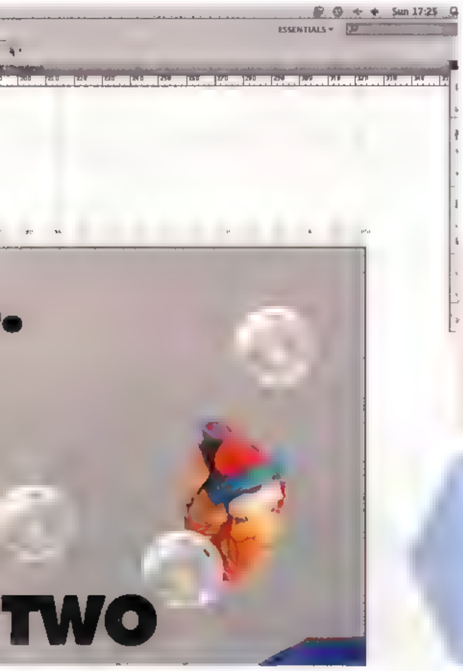




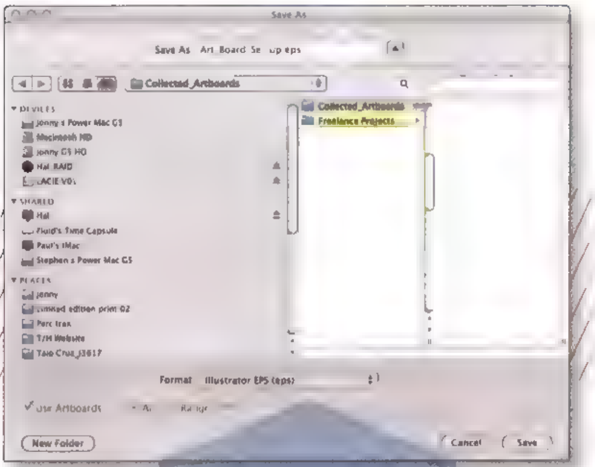
Some **useful shortcuts**
Shift+O enters Artboard mode, Option+arrow keys cycles through artboards, Esc exits Artboard mode

→ dialogue box. Once your Photoshop artwork is imported, Illustrator will recognise the layers as individual movable objects. Position the key art correctly on the initial artboard, select all the elements and group them. Next use the Artboard tool (Shift+O) to select the next artboard. The black line that appears around it will be bolder and more prominent. Paste your grouped key art into this new artboard and scale it accordingly. Move, scale and manually adjust the individual illustration objects on each artboard to best fit the size format you are working to. Small designs, such as those in A7 format, will have considerably fewer illustrative elements than the larger sizes. Check type point sizes when scaling poster artwork and be mindful of the font size on each particular format. Scaling a poster down from A3 may leave typographic elements or key details too small on A5.

The Guides and Rulers feature functions globally across all of the artboards in the document when using the multiple artboard set-up. To view a unique set of width and height rulers for your selected artboard, go to View>Show


Sun 17:25
ESSENTIALS
TWO

Show and hide artboard rulers with Opt+Cmd+R. It gives you **rulers specific to the artboard** that's currently selected


Save As
Save As: Art_Board_Set_up.eps
Collected_Artboards
DEVICES
Jonny's Power Mac G5
Macintosh HD
Jonny G5 HD
Hal RAID
LACIE VOL
SHARED
Hal
Floyd's Time Capsule
Paul's iMac
Stephen's Power Mac G5
PLACES
Jonny
Freelance Projects
Format: Illustrator EPS (eps)
Use Artboards
New Folder
Cancel
Save

The **Range function** can be checked when exporting artboards to individual documents. This allows you to only export selected artboards

Five pro tips

1/ Use objects as grids

[illegible] within your [illegible]

2/ Custom measurements

[illegible] as your artwork temp[illegible] make things easier and takes a[illegible]

3/ Settings for fine detail

When [illegible]

[illegible]

4/ Guide for guides

[illegible] tes and [illegible] trator (unlike [illegible]

5/ Larger artboards

[illegible] illustrations or [illegible] board will he[illegible] multipl[illegible] me time and a[illegible] ons, additio[illegible] so on. Th[illegible] me opening [illegible] ccess files [illegible]

Artboard Rulers. These rulers will apply to your selected artboard. To create guides on one specific artboard select it with the Artboard tool (Shift+O) and create the guide as normal. Making a guide while the artboard is selected ensures it will only span the width or height of that specific artboard.

Once you have created your multiple size formats and have settled on a final layout, it's then possible to export and save each artboard as a separate file. Files can be saved individually in EPS format. Saving separate files allows you to open each file individually, so you can send various single files to different clients and printers or drop your individual artworks into InDesign for further work or a more complex print output.

To save your multiple artboards out as individual EPS files, choose File>Save As and then name your file. Select Illustrator EPS from the drop-down format menu and check the Use Artboards box. This will give you the option of exporting all the artboards, or just a page range selection if you only require certain pages. Before saving make a new folder with the 'New Folder' button in the dialogue box. Saving your artwork here will keep all your separate artboard files together in one location. A separate Illustrator master file that includes all your artboards is also created when saving via this process.

When used effectively, multiple artboards, grids and guides can benefit your workflow efficiency and cohesiveness across different media. A little groundwork sets the foundations for a faster, more effective project, taking a lot of the rudimentary elements out and allowing more time for creativity.

Illustrator Essentials

GET ALL THESE VIDEOS ONLINE!
www.computerarts.co.uk/illustratoressentials

Got 10 minutes to spare? Check out these tutorials and the accompanying videos to further your Illustrator tool skills

GET THE MOST OUT OF THE BLEND TOOL 50
Steven Bonner shows you how to improve your work with Illustrator's Blend tool

MAP ARTWORK ONTO 3D OBJECTS 51
Luke O'Neill reveals a quick and easy way to add 3D elements to your design and illustration work

USING TRANSPARENCY THE RIGHT WAY 52
We show you how to add instant depth to your work using Illustrator's range of transparency tools

QUICK AND EASY PATTERN SWATCHES 53
Becca Allen explains how to make complex and colourful pattern swatches using the Pattern Creation mode in Illustrator CS6

HOW TO USE ADOBE KULER 54
Steven Bonner shares his tips on how to use Kuler directly with Adobe Illustrator for fast results

MASTER ENVELOPE DISTORT 55
Envelope distortion can be a powerful ally. Here, we run you through the basics

ADD MORE CHARACTER WITH STROKES 56
Steven Bonner digs a little deeper to get past the basics and unearth some cool tricks using strokes

TRANSFORM FLAT LETTERS INTO 3D 57
Here's how to apply gradients to strokes to quickly turn 2D images into 3D

MASTER THE SHAPE BUILDER TOOL 58
Ben O'Brien explains how to create complex new shapes with ease using the Shape Builder tool

WORK WITH RASTER EFFECTS 59
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BREATH LIFE INTO PATTERN SWATCHES 60
Becca Allen shows you how a few tools in Illustrator can turn a flat vector pattern swatch into a 3D object

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LIVE COLOR TOOL BASICS 62
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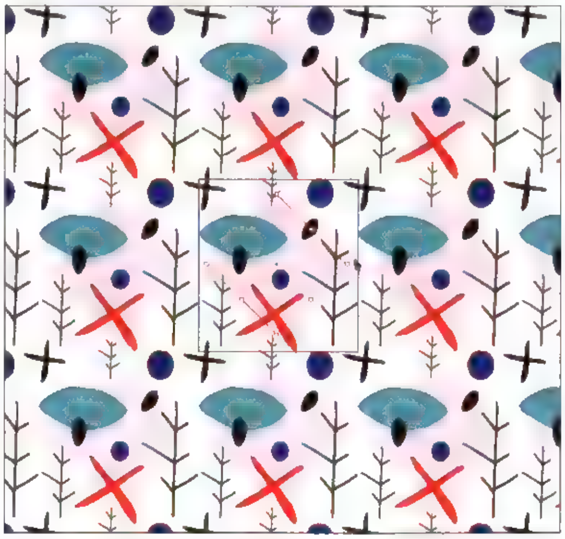
We reveal how to quickly and easily create and adapt a collection of vector shapes

Use transparency the right way _**Page 52**

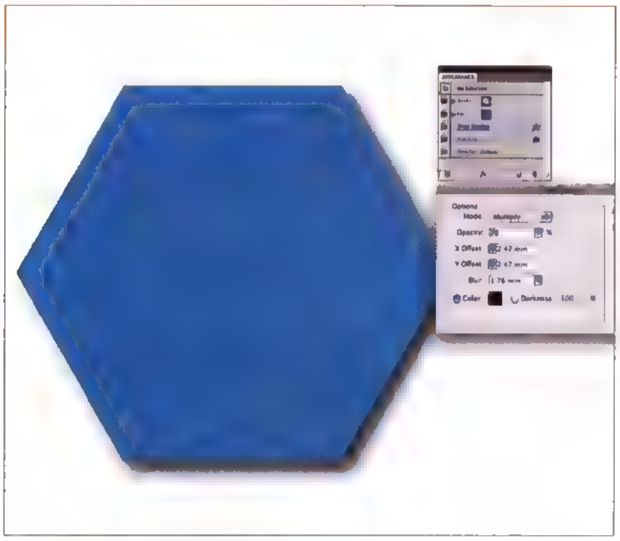


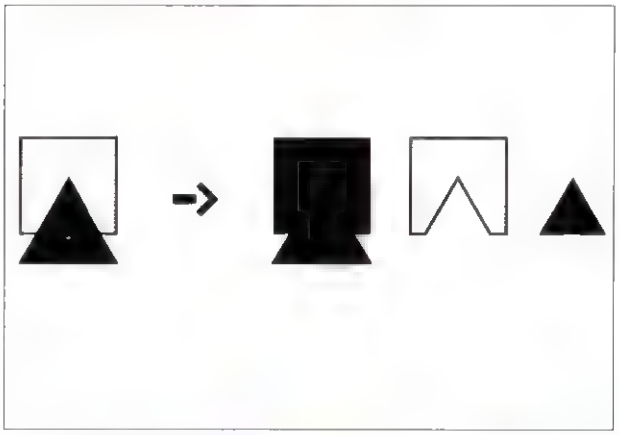
Quick and easy patterns _**Page 53**

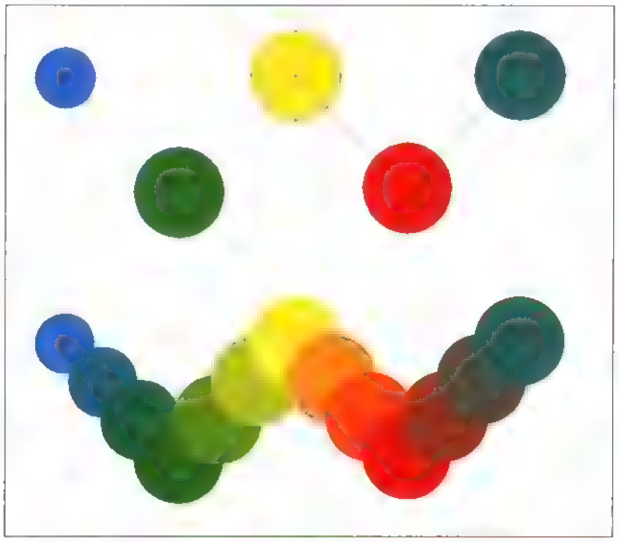
Quick skills
Learn new Illustrator tools!

Map art onto 3D objects _**Page 51**

EASY
COLOUR
WITH
How to use Adobe Kuler _**Page 54**


Work with raster effects _**Page 59**


Easy shape creation _**Page 63**


Get the most out of the blend tool _**Page 50**

FEATURES
QUICK SKILLS
TUTORIALS
SHOWCASE

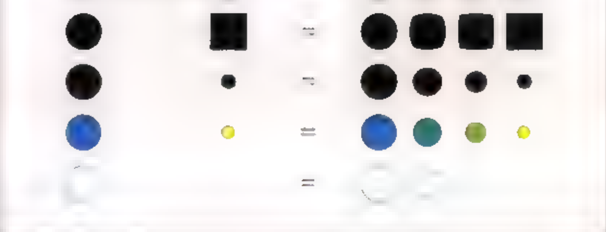
Video tutorial
Any version of Illustrator

Get the most out of the Blend tool

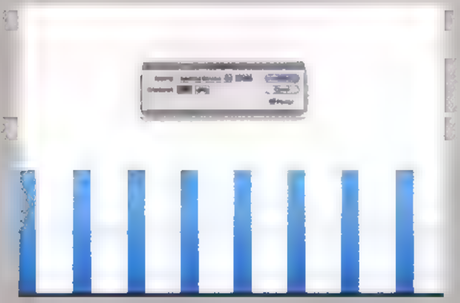
Steven Bonner shows you how to improve your work with Illustrator's Blend tool

The Blend tool is an invaluable asset for designers and illustrators alike. It's one of those 'everyday' tools and I rarely complete a job without using it in some way at least once, whether for illustration work, lettering, infographics or more.

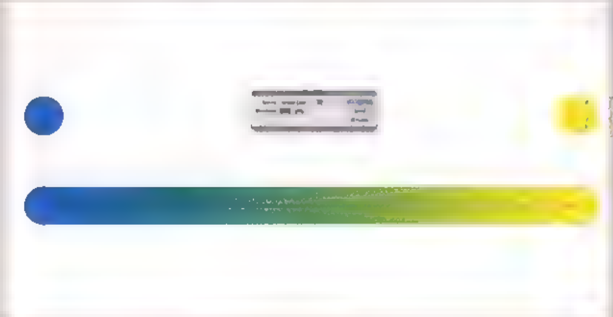
The tool can be a little confusing to start with – but once you're fluent with it, you'll wonder how you got along without it. In this short introduction, I'll show you some different ways to get the most out of the Blend tool.



01__The most basic thing you can do with the Blend tool is to blend one shape into another across a specified number of steps. Draw a circle, hold Opt/Alt+Shift and drag it across the artboard to create a duplicate. Now select both shapes and go to Object>Blend>Make (or hit Cmd/Ctrl+Opt/Alt+B) to create a blend between the two. Illustrator will produce a default blend, which might not be what you want – so to edit it, keep the blend selected and double-click the Blend tool icon in the toolbar. Select Specified Steps and change the value. If you tick the Preview checkbox you'll be able to see the effect the value has on your blend instantly. Be aware that blending works on both filled and stroked shapes, as well as those using transparency, making it a really versatile tool.



02__The second way to blend is via the Specified Distance option, which does exactly what you'd think and spaces out the steps by a specifically chosen distance between each one, rather than by defining a particular number. This can be useful for making perfectly measured diagrams or bar charts, for example, where you need elements to be equidistant from one another and to adhere to a predetermined grid.



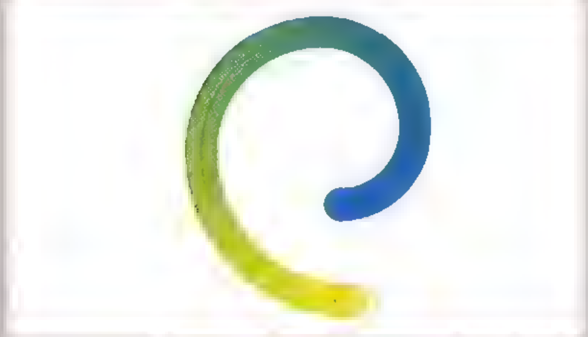
03__Smooth Colour is a slightly different option and creates a smooth, filled blend between your two objects. This is useful when looking to create particularly intricate gradients or cloth-like effects. As before, create two shapes – but this time give them two different colours and blend as before. In your editing options, this time choose Smooth Colour and click OK. You'll see that rather than blending in steps, a continuous block of colour has been produced to link one shape to the other.

Steven Bonner
__Stirling-based Steven is a multi-disciplined designer and illustrator who works for clients like Nike, Penguin, Cadbury and Diesel. His love of type is evident throughout his work. www.stevenbonner.com

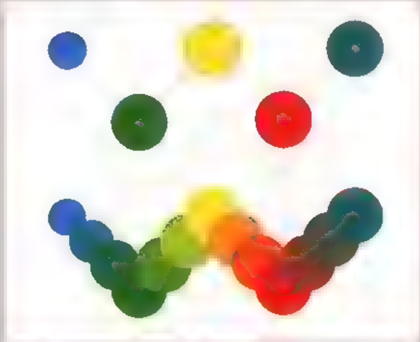
Time needed
10 minutes

Video tutorial
You'll find the video tutorial at www.computerarts.co.uk/illustratoressentials

Skills
- Blend by specified distances
- Create smooth and curved blends
- Blend different transparencies and shapes



04__The Blend tool becomes really interesting when you start to use the Replace Spine option to create blends on a path other than a standard straight line. Draw the shape or open path that you'd like the blend to follow, and select it, along with your previously made blend. Go to Object>Blend>Replace Spine. You will see that the blend has now attached itself to your new curve, making an interesting effect. When editing your blend, be mindful of which aligning option you choose (Align to Page versus Align to Path) as they give significantly different results.



05__Be aware that you're not just limited to blending two objects. You can create a blend using as many different shapes, colours and transparencies as you can think of.

Video tutorial
Illustrator CS3 or later

Map artwork onto 3D vector objects

Luke O'Neill reveals a quick and easy way to add 3D elements to your design and illustration work

Whether you want to add an extra dimension to your illustration work or mock-up how a design might look once applied to a piece of packaging, the ability to map artwork onto 3D surfaces is a valuable addition to any creative professional's skill set. However, the time it takes to learn to use professional 3D software can be prohibitive if 3D only forms a small and irregular part of your workflow. That's where Illustrator's 3D tools come in handy.

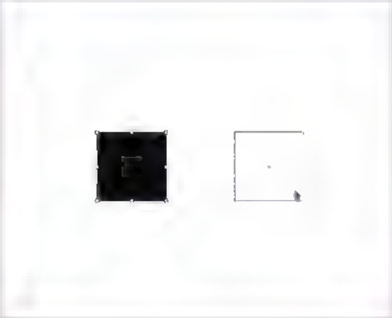
Here, I'll demonstrate how you can quickly map artwork onto 3D objects. Using the same techniques that I employed to create elements for a magazine cover, I'll run through the essential skills you need to use this technique in your own work.

Luke O'Neill
— A northern designer and illustrator living in London working for T3 magazine. He has a penchant for clean, black lines and has been known to partake in impromptu experimental dance sessions after a shandy or two.
www.lukeoneill.co.uk

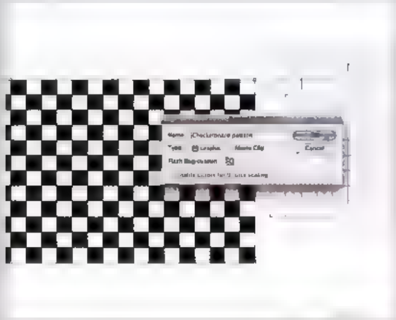
Video tutorial
You'll find the video tutorial at www.computerarts.co.uk/illustratoressentials

Time needed
10 minutes

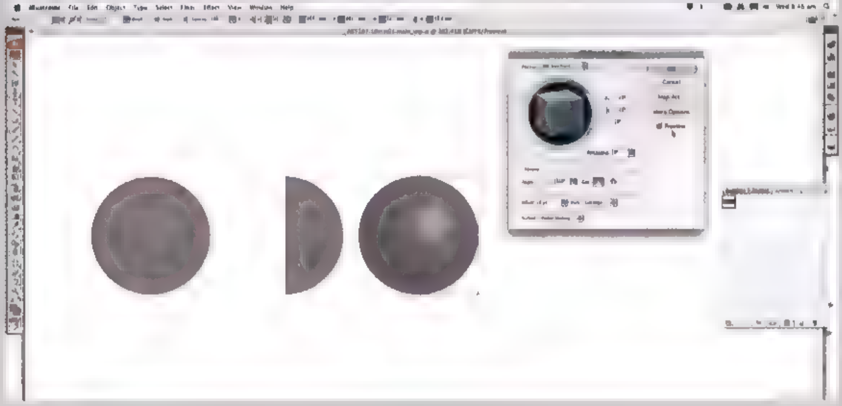
Skills
- Work with 3D objects
- Use symbols



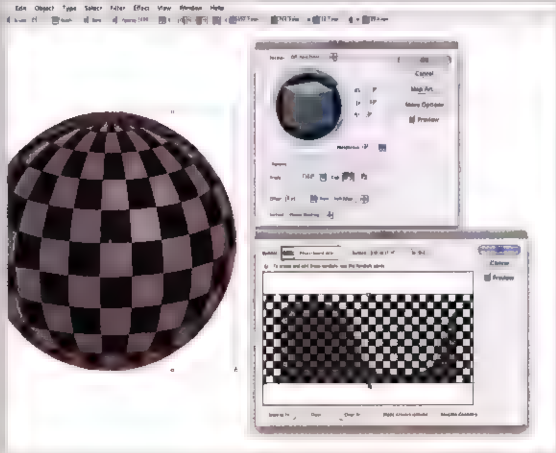
01 — To begin, we're going to create some vector shapes and patterns that we'll later use to map our 3D objects with. These can be as simple or complex as you choose, but I often find that bold geometric patterns work the best. To duplicate a single shape, simply hold Alt/Opt and drag it. To repeat this action simply hit Ctrl/Cmd+D.



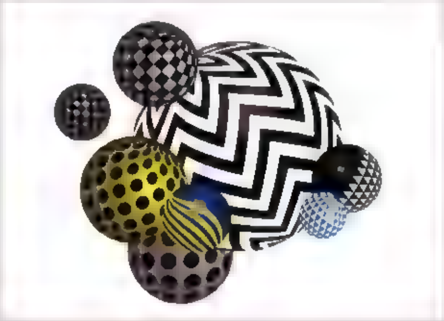
02 — Once a number of patterns have been created, we need to add these to our Symbols library so that they can be used to map our 3D objects. Simply select all the elements of the pattern or object and drag them one by one into the Symbols library ensuring that Graphic – and not Movie Clip – is selected. It's a good idea at this stage to name each symbol.



03 — Now to create our 3D spheres. Using the Ellipse tool, draw a perfect circle by holding Shift whilst drawing it. Now, using the Direct Selection tool, select the far left anchor point and delete it, leaving you with a semi circle. Go to Effect>3D>Revolve, hit the Preview button and you'll see that we have a perfect sphere.



04 — To apply the patterns we created, simply hit the Map Art button, which will launch a new window. In the new window you have a drop-down menu where you can choose the symbol that you'd like to use and also which surface to apply it to – but as this is a sphere there is only one side. You might need to play around with the size of the symbol to ensure it works in the way that you intended.



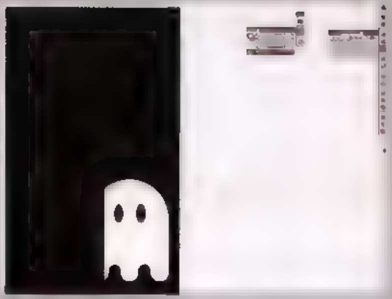
05 — This technique can be applied to any 3D object, so experiment with different shapes, remembering that for spherical objects you only need to draw half of it and then use the Revolve 3D option. The Extrude & Bevel option is worth exploring as this enables you to create cylindrical and cube-like shapes that can be mapped with different symbols on all sides.

Video tutorial
Illustrator CS3 or later

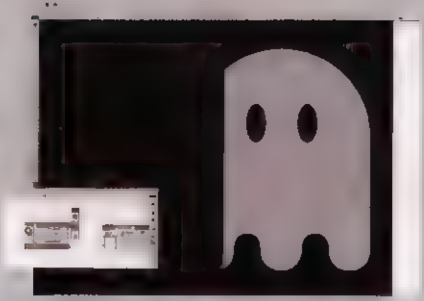
Using transparency in Illustrator

Steven Bonner shows you how to add instant depth to your work using Illustrator's range of transparency tools

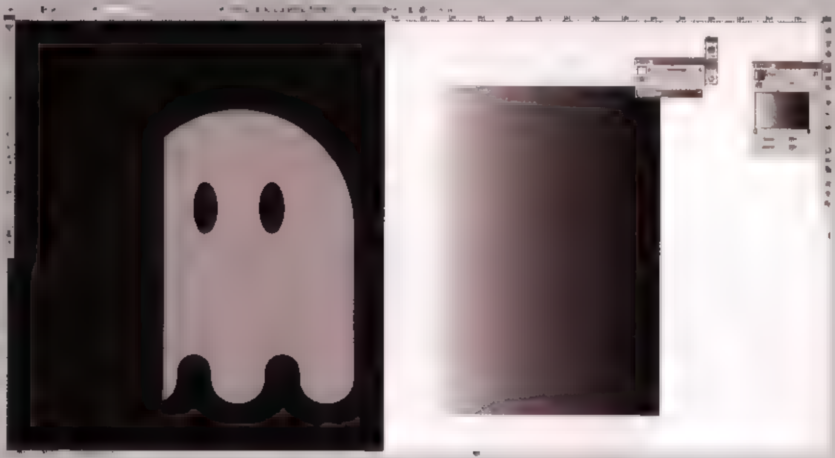
With all the features available in Adobe Illustrator, it's easy to overlook the various tools it offers for using transparency within your work. Employed properly, these can help boost a flat image into one with more realism and depth. In this tutorial, I'll show you three techniques that are simple but can be used in a number of ways to create richly layered pieces.



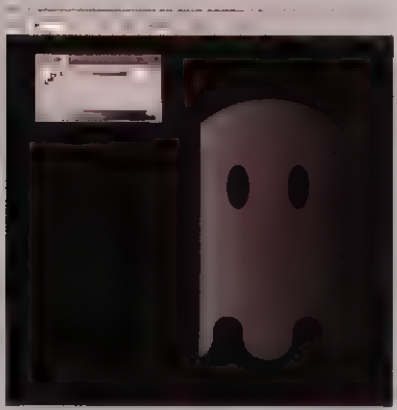
01 ___ To start, I've drawn this simple little scene with a ghost milling around in the woods. What we're going to do is use three different techniques to quickly apply transparency, and therefore depth, to our image. We want to give the illusion that the ghost is slightly transparent.



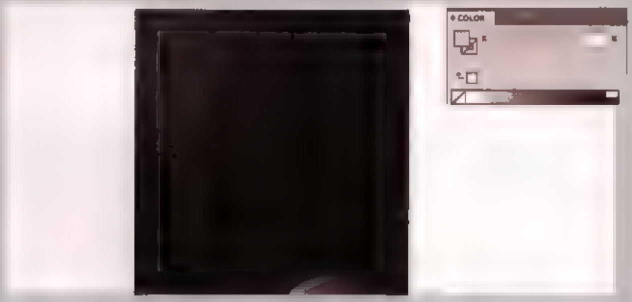
02 ___ The first method uses the blending modes found in the Transparency palette (Window>Transparency). Select the ghost shape and reduce the Opacity to about 70%. The background starts to show through, giving the illusion of a wispy ghost. However, it's still looking a bit flat so we'll add another level of transparency.



03 ___ As the image stands, the ghost is sitting in the middle of the woods, behind one tree and in front of another – we want to accentuate this more. Create a new element using the Rectangle tool (M) and give it a simple black-to-white gradient. This will form our Opacity mask. Remember that the white areas are opaque, and that the more black you add, the more transparent it gets.



04 ___ Position the gradient over the ghost shape and select both items. Next, click on the flyout menu at the top-right of the Transparency palette and select Make Opacity Mask. This will then overlay the gradient as a transparency effect on the object selected below it. You'll see that this now adds more realistic shading to the ghost shape.



05 ___ Lastly, draw a circle using the Ellipse tool (L) and position it to the top-left of the image. For our last look at transparency, we'll explore adding it to gradients. Apply another black-to-white gradient to the circle, but this time choose Radial. Under the slider, you'll see an Opacity menu. This controls the opacity of the colour currently selected. Select the white colour and reduce Opacity to 15%, then click on the black colour and do the same, but this time to 0%. Now you have a soft light that you can use to suggest the light of the moon in the night-time scene.

Steven Bonner
— Stirling-based Steven is a multi-disciplined designer and illustrator who works for clients like Nike, Penguin, Cadbury and Diesel. His love of type is evident throughout his work. www.stevenbonner.com

Video tutorial
You'll find the video tutorial at www.computerarts.co.uk/illustratoressentials

Time needed
10 mins

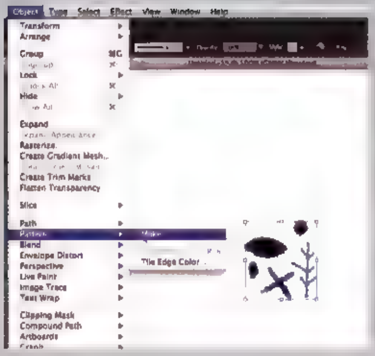
Skills
- Add opacity masks
- Use blending modes

Video tutorial
Illustrator CS6 or later

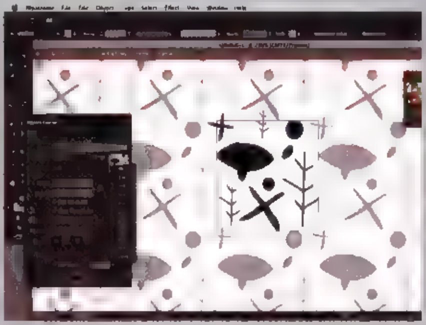
Quick and easy pattern swatches

Becca Allen explains how to make complex and colourful pattern swatches using the Pattern Creation mode in Illustrator CS6

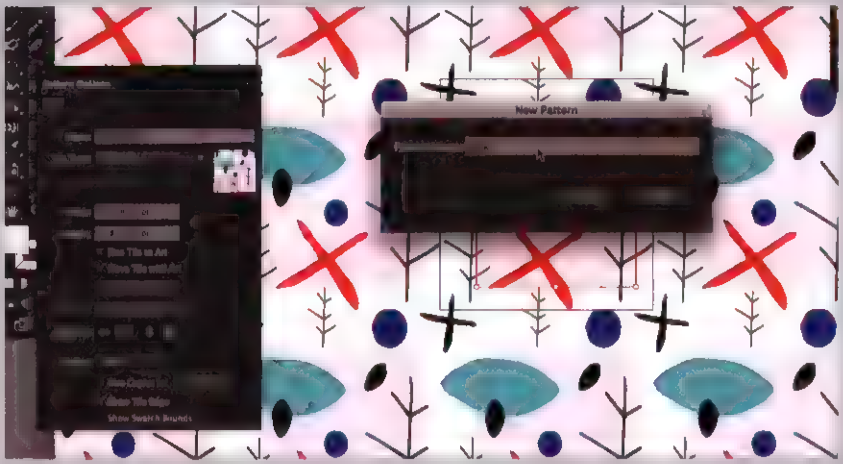
I'm going to show you in just five steps how easy it has become to create new patterns using the CS6 Pattern Creation mode. With this new tool, measuring, cropping and aligning have become things of the past and you can create complex patterns in a fraction of the time. Easy to use, and bringing immediate results, this is one of my favourite features of Adobe's Creative Suite 6.


Object
Type
Select
Effect
View
Window
Help
Transform
Arrange
Group
Lock
Hide
Expand
Rasterize
Create Gradient Mesh...
Create Trim Marks
Flatten Transparency
Slice
Path
Pattern
Make
Blend
Envelope Distort
Perspective
Live Paint
Image Trace
Text Wrap
Tile Edge Color
Clipping Mask
Compound Path
Artboards

01____First open the objects that are used for the base of the pattern, then go to Object>Pattern>Make. This puts Illustrator into a new Pattern Creation mode and opens up the Pattern Options panel. The original object is still there, but with copies that give a preview of the pattern.



02____Dim copies to see the original artwork more clearly, and get ready to add some elements to the pattern. You still have access to all the transformation tools in this mode, so you can copy objects and change the colours until you are happy. You'll notice that the parts of the object that extend outside of the tile automatically wrap back in on the other side.


New Pattern

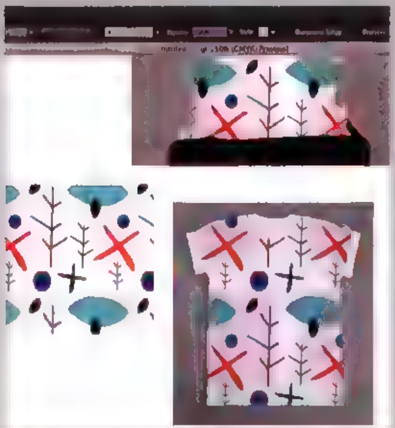
03____When you are happy with the pattern, turn off Dimmed Copies to get a quick preview of how the pattern will look. When you are happy, you just need to click Save a Copy and name the swatch to see it added to the Swatches panel.

Becca Allen
__Based in sunny Devon in the UK, Becca Allen is a freelance designer and illustrator. She's also a womenswear designer for Rhythm Livin EU, where she sees the design process through from initial idea to finished article. She specialises in graphics, all-over-prints and trims. www.beccaallen.co.uk

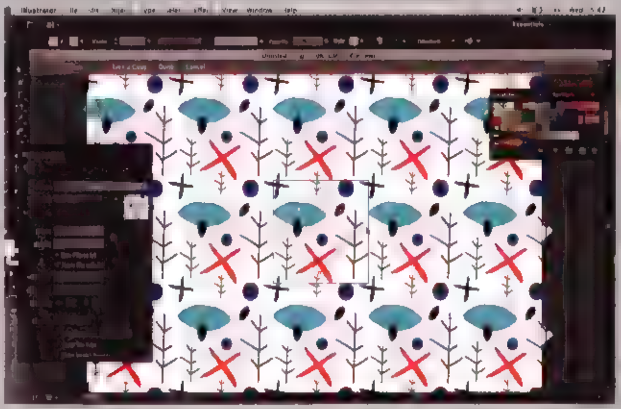
Video tutorial
You'll find the video tutorial at www.computerarts.co.uk/illustratoressentials

Time needed
10 minutes

Skills
- Use the Pattern Creation mode
- Edit and tile patterns before applying them to products



04____Try out the pattern on some blank product examples to see if you are happy with the way it looks. If at any time you want to make any changes, just double click on the swatch in the Swatches panel and this will bring you back into the Pattern Editing mode.



05____Everything in the pattern can still be edited. You can add objects, change their colours, size and position or create new objects. To apply the changes click Done, and this will automatically change the swatch and bring you back to your page and out of Pattern Editing mode.

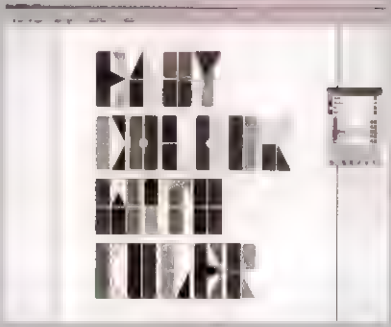
Video tutorial
Illustrator CS5 or later

Using Adobe's Kuler engine with Illustrator

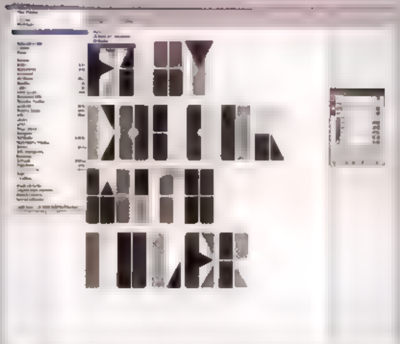
Steven Bonner shares his tips on how to use Kuler directly with Adobe Illustrator for fast results

The right colour palette can turn a good image into a great image, but it isn't always easy to select the best combination for your work. Adobe's Kuler is a web-hosted community-based colour scheme editor that enables users to create and share inspirational colour schemes for use in their own projects. It's an amazing resource, especially for those less comfortable choosing their own colour schemes.

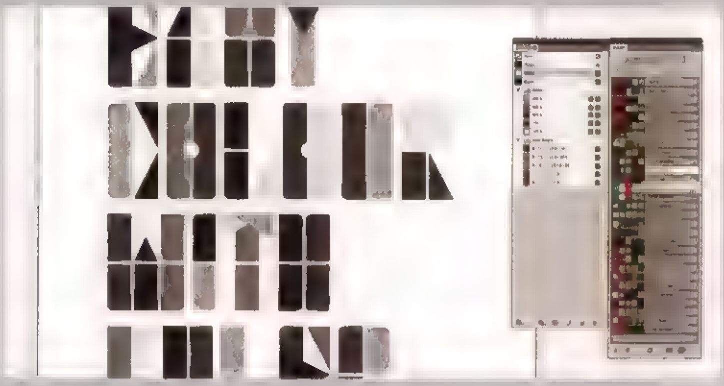
In this tutorial, you'll learn to work with Kuler in Illustrator as part of your normal workflow. Over the following steps, I'll explain how to apply colour schemes quickly and easily to any vector image.



01 To show the effect that this tip will have, there's a file on the assets web page that uses my Build display font as a basic design. You can use any vector image you like, such as a pattern or existing design, but in this case it's best to keep the colours to five, which is the maximum in the Kuler palettes. (I've broken the letters down into shades of black for this example.)



02 The first thing you need to do is navigate to Window>Extensions>Kuler. This will instruct Illustrator to contact Adobe's online application and load it directly into Illustrator in the form of a new palette on your workspace.



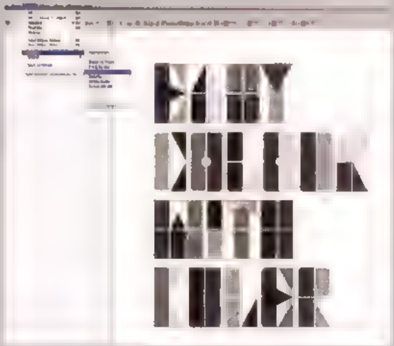
03 You'll see in the new palette that there are several options available. Take a minute to familiarise yourself with it: it's quite simple and easy to work with. The search bar at the top enables you to enter a search term that might relate to your design or the feel you're trying to achieve, or you might just want to be random and see what pops up. Once you've chosen a scheme you like, select it and click on the 'Add Selected Theme to Swatches' icon. This will add the scheme to your Swatch palette in its own named group.

Steven Bonner
Stirling-based Steven is a multi-disciplined designer and illustrator who works for clients like Nike, Penguin, Cadbury and Diesel. His love of type is evident throughout his work. www.stevenbonner.com

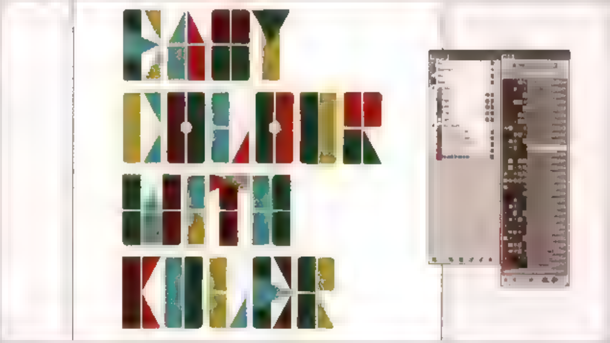
Video tutorial
You'll find the video tutorial at www.computerarts.co.uk/illustratoressentials

Time needed
10 mins

Skills
- Colour selection
- Effective use of the Kuler engine



04 To start applying your new scheme, simply select an element within your design and go to Select>Same>Fill Colour to select all elements on the canvas that use the same colour or shade. Then simply click on a colour in your new scheme to apply it.



05 Continue the same technique until you have replaced all five original colours with those in the new scheme. That's it: a simple and extremely quick way of adding great new colour schemes to your designs. If you like choosing colour schemes, you can also join up at Kuler then upload your own for sharing directly from the Kuler palette in Illustrator. Have fun!

Video tutorial
Any version of Illustrator

Work with Envelope Distort effects

Envelope distortion can be a powerful ally. **Luke O'Neill** runs you through the basics

Illustrator's Envelope Distort tools are extremely useful, whether you're creating artwork that requires a sense of realism or you simply wish to distort and manipulate shapes and objects with ease. Unlike many of the Warp and Distort options found under the Effect menu, using Envelope Distort enables you to take complete control over the way your artwork is manipulated, putting the power in your hands.

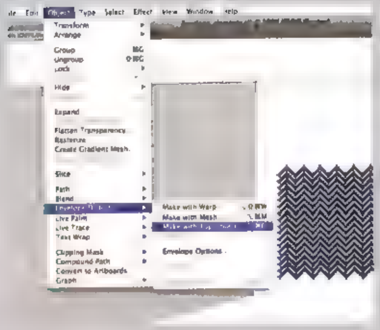
In this tutorial I'll run you through the three basic Envelope Distort techniques. 'Make with Top Object', 'Make with Warp' and finally 'Make with Mesh'. Each option works in a slightly different way and has its own particular benefits and advantages. Over the following steps, you'll find ways in which you can apply these techniques to your own work.

Luke O'Neill
— A northern designer and illustrator living in the southern province of Bath. He has a penchant for clean, black lines and has been known to partake in impromptu experimental dance sessions after a shandy or two.
www.lukeoneill.co.uk

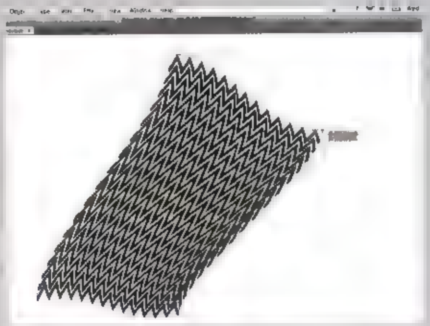
Video tutorial
You'll find the video tutorial at www.computerarts.co.uk/illustratoressentials

Time needed
10 minutes

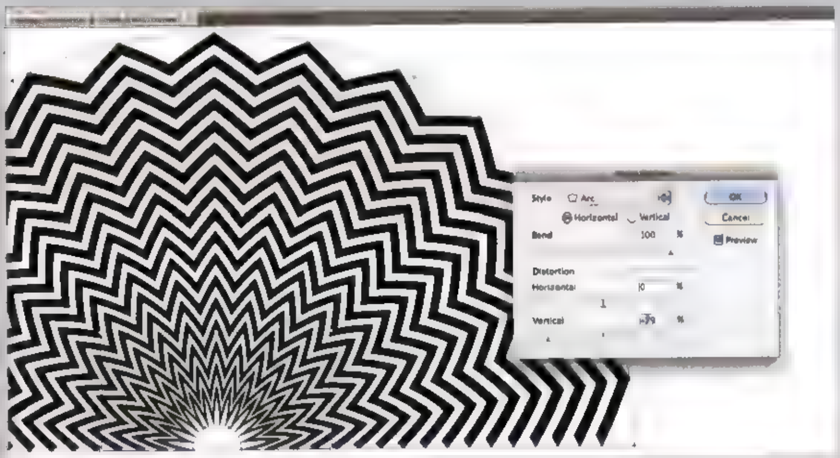
Skills
— Work with the Envelope Distort panel



01 — Create two separate objects: in this case I have a zigzag pattern and a skewed oblong shape, which will act as the envelope. Ensure that the oblong shape is at the front by hitting Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+] and then go to Object>Envelope Distort>Make with Top Object.

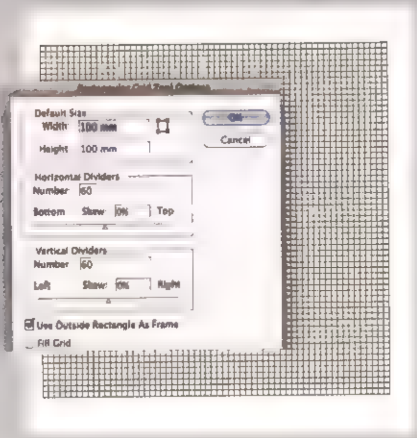


02 — Your artwork has now been mapped onto the shape of your chosen envelope object. To further edit the distortion, use the Direct Selection tool to drag and twist the anchor points until you're satisfied. To edit the contents of the distortion, simply go to Envelope Distort>Edit Contents.



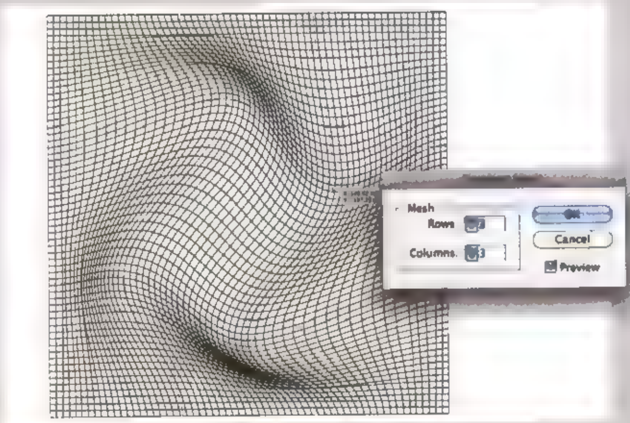
Style: Arc
● Horizontal ○ Vertical
Bend: 100 %
Distortion
Horizontal: 0 %
Vertical: -79 %

03 — The second option you have is the Make with Warp tool found under the same menu. You only need to have the object or artwork that you wish to distort selected for this option, and then it's simply a case of picking a style and playing around with the parameters. As with any distortion tool, be careful not to push it too far as you can quickly and easily end up with a bit of a mess.



Default Size
Width: 100 mm
Height: 100 mm
Horizontal Dividers
Number: 60
Bottom Skew: 0% Top
Vertical Dividers
Number: 60
Left Skew: 0% Right
☑ Use Outside Rectangle As Frame
☐ Fill Grid

04 — The final option is the Make with Mesh option and in this example we're going to distort a grid. Select the Rectangular Grid tool, hold Opt/Alt and click anywhere on the artboard to bring up the grid options. Enter your desired size and then specify 60 horizontal dividers and 60 vertical dividers.



Mesh
Rows: 3
Columns: 3

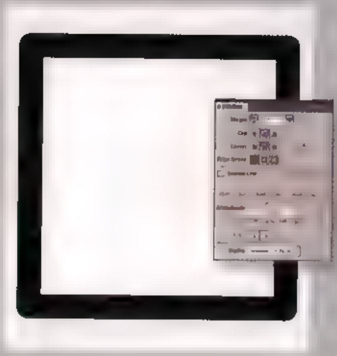
05 — With your artwork selected go to Make with Mesh and specify three rows and three columns. You're able to manipulate individual anchor points and, as we've used a grid, this results in an undulating contour effect.

Video tutorial
Illustrator CS5 or later

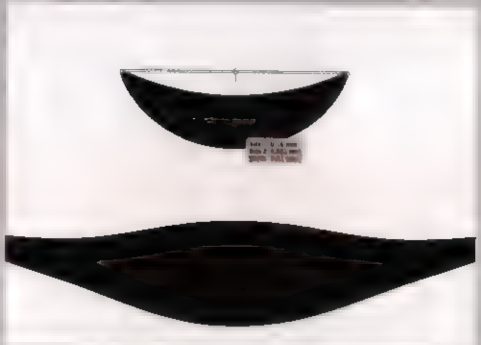
Add more character with strokes

Steven Bonner digs a little deeper to get past the basics and unearth some cool tricks using strokes

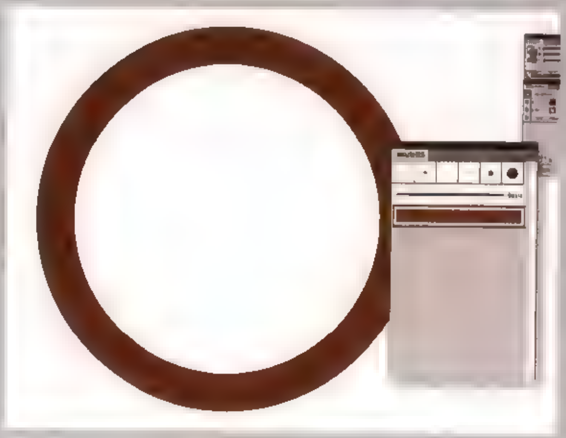
Strokes are one of the core foundations in Illustrator. Adding a stroke to a simple shape is one of the very first things most of us did when we first used the software. Adobe has improved the humble stroke in some interesting ways that can really enhance your work with CS5. Over the following steps, I'll show you some nice features that you can use to add more character to your work.



01___ Strokes can be added using the Color panel – which will add a basic 1pt stroke to any object using your selected colour – and edited through the Stroke panel, which offers a whole range of customisation options. There are some great new features in CS5, in the shape of preset width profiles, which let you apply width variations to your lines, as well as improved arrowheads.



02___ The Width tool is a new addition to the Illustrator toolset, and enables you to create custom strokes of varying thickness, with full control, either symmetrically or asymmetrically. Simply draw a line, select the Width tool, and click and-drag anywhere along the line to fatten up or thin out the width. By holding the Opt/Alt key when dragging, the line will adjust on one side only, giving you control over the profile. You can also double-click on a point to bring up a Width Point Edit dialog box, enabling you to adjust each point with precision if preferred. Once you're happy with a line, you can save its profile for later use by going to the drop-down menu in the Stroke panel and selecting Add to Profiles.



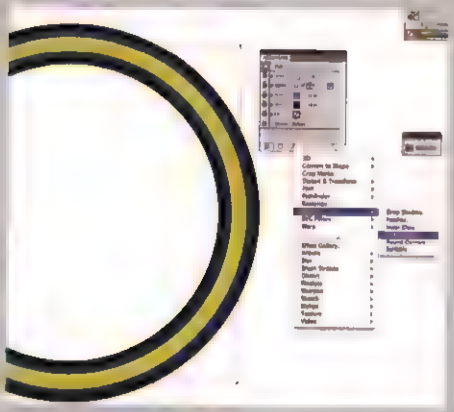
03___ More in-depth stroke shapes can be made by creating a shape and then dragging it into the Brushes panel and selecting Art Brush from the options. Once your shape is added, you can edit the orientation and width to customise it further. This is a good way to quickly create childlike or painterly strokes in your work, and great fun to experiment with.

Steven Bonner
___Stirling-based Steven is a multi-disciplined designer and illustrator who works for clients like Nike, Penguin, Cadbury and Diesel. His love of type is evident throughout his work www.stevenbonner.com

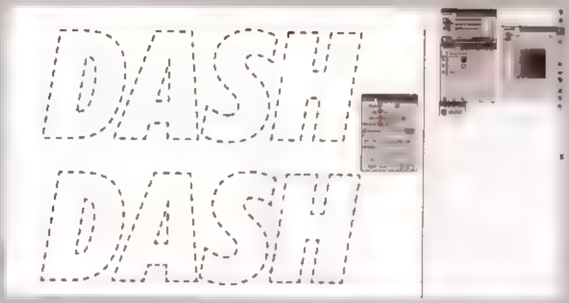
Time needed
10 minutes

Video tutorial
You'll find the video tutorial at www.computerarts.co.uk/illustratoressentials

Skills
- Create custom strokes with the Brushes panel
- Make the most of the Width tool
- Master the Appearance panel



04___ Multiple strokes can be created on one path by making use of the Appearance panel. Simply draw a line, and click on the Add Stroke button in the Appearance panel to insert a new stroke on the same line. From here, you can adjust each stroke that you add individually, changing the width, colour and various effects to create some interesting looks.



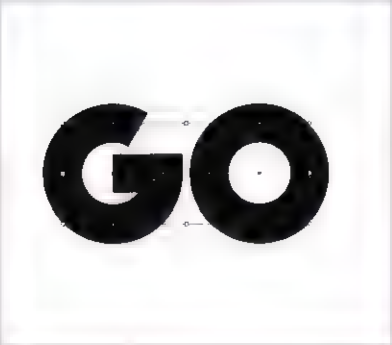
05___ One thing that was always a little annoying in earlier versions of Illustrator was the way it handled dashed lines. If you drew a square, for example, and added a dashed stroke, you would end up with ugly corners as it preserved the exact gaps and dash lengths specified. Now, however, Adobe had added a nifty little option to the right of the Dashed Line checkbox in the Stroke panel, which aligns the dashes in the corners and subtly adjusts the gaps to fit more pleasingly.

Video tutorial
Illustrator CS6

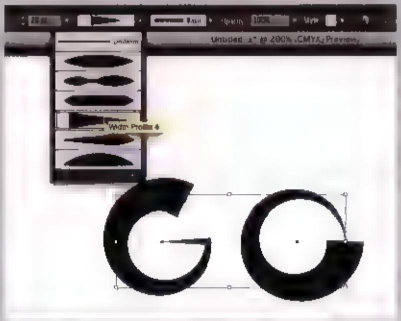
Transform flat letters into 3D type

Becca Allen shows you how to apply gradients to strokes to quickly turn 2D images into 3D

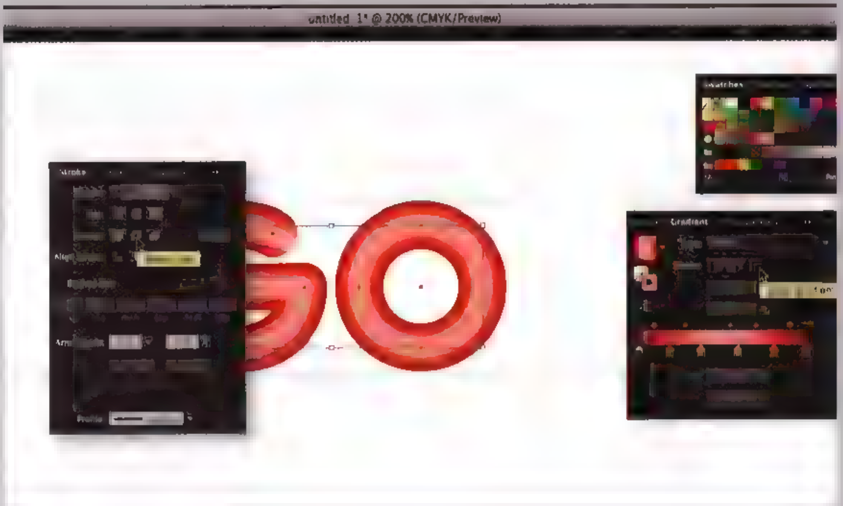
Illustrator CS6's feature for applying gradients across strokes is a quick and effective way to transform a simple path into a complex shape. You can add depth to an illustration and even quickly create 3D type that pops with the Pen tool. Gradients can be applied along the length, width or within a stroke. This new feature gives you complete control over gradient placement and opacity, so you can now use strokes rather than fills for sophisticated artwork.



01___ Open Illustrator and ensure your workspace is set to Essentials. Then draw any two basic letters with the Pen tool to start off your 3D typeface. Use a simple black stroke, and change the thickness to 28pt to create bold letters.



02___ There is now a new option to add variable width to strokes with the Variable Width Profile box. We will keep ours as Uniform this time, but the variable widths are fun to experiment with and are great tools for shading elements of illustrations and contours.



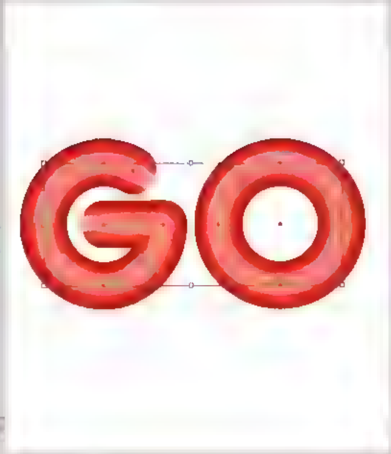
03___ Open up the Stroke panel and set Cap and Corner to Round Join, to round the letters off. Now open the Gradient panel and start adding colours to create a faded fill. Apply darker shades to the outside of the fill and lighter shades towards the inside.

Becca Allen
___Becca is a freelance designer and illustrator. She's also a womenswear designer for Rhythm Livin EU, where she sees the design process through from initial idea to finished article. She specialises in graphics, all-over-prints and trims. www.beccaallen.co.uk

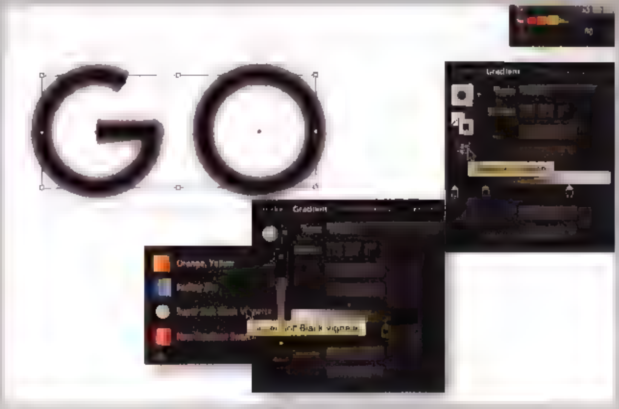
Video tutorial
You'll find the video tutorial at www.computerarts.co.uk/illustratoressentials

Time needed
10 minutes

Skills
- Use the Variable Width path
- Add a gradient to strokes



04___ Now you have the option to apply a gradient either within, along or across your stroke. When applying along the stroke, you have the option to change the angle and positioning of the gradient. I applied the gradient across the stroke to achieve a quick, realistic 3D effect.



05___ Once you're happy with the gradient, add it to your swatches using the Add to Swatches button on the drop-down Swatches menu. There are also some preset swatches you can experiment with. For example, the Reverse the Gradient button above the Swatches bar creates a glow effect rather than 3D.

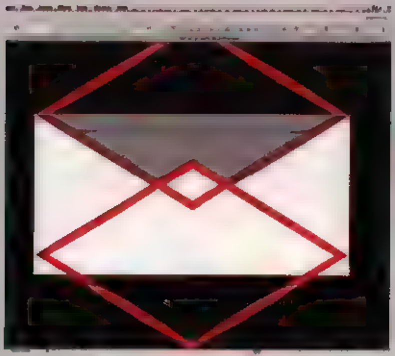
Video tutorial
Illustrator CS5 or later

Master the Shape Builder tool

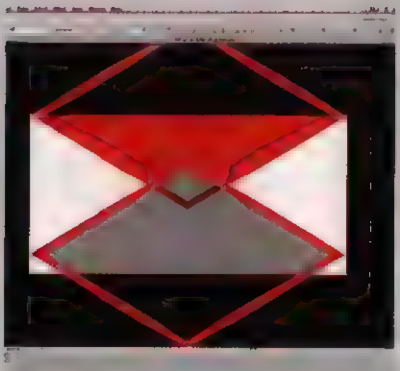
Ben O'Brien explains how to create complex new shapes with ease using the Shape Builder tool

The Shape Builder tool in Illustrator is great for creating complex new shapes with very little effort. With functionality similar to the Pathfinder panel, it's far more intuitive, simpler to use and enables more efficient and tidier shape creation.

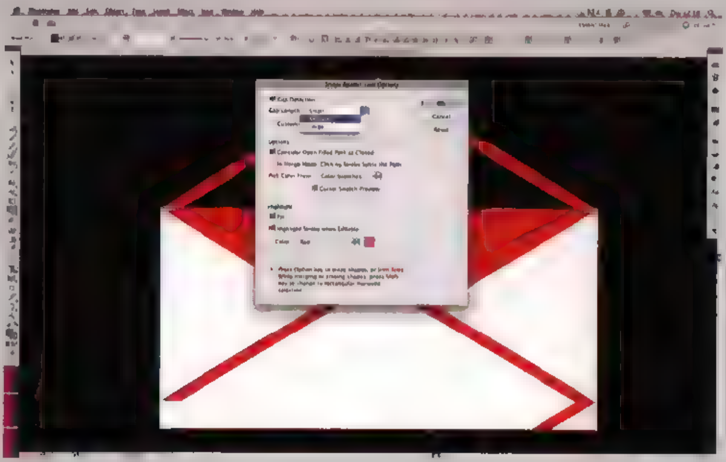
The Shape Builder tool can be used to combine shapes, lettering and lines into complex forms while also adding colour. I'll show you how to incorporate the tool into your workflow to speed up your design process, enabling you to swiftly try an array of different options and compositions.



01___ To combine two or more overlapping shapes, select all the relevant shapes and drag the Shape Builder tool (Shift+M) over them to combine them. Areas of overlap will be highlighted



02___ If you want to combine a broader selection of shapes into one new shape, hold down the Shift key while you drag the Shape Builder tool. This will create a rectangle area, and every shape in that area will be combined together as one



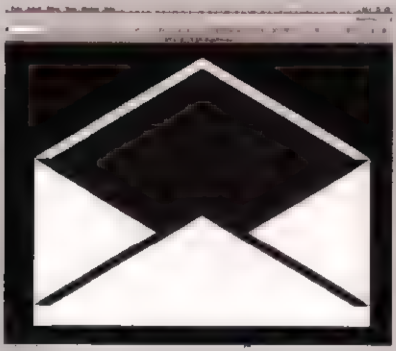
03___ Gaps in the outlines of your shapes can have an effect on the new ones created. Double-click on the Shape Builder tool in the toolbar to open the Shape Builder Tool Options dialog. Here you can choose the size of gap that you would like to be detected, enabling you to join different forms without leaving tiny unwanted shapes where the gaps were.

Ben O'Brien
___ Also known as Ben the Illustrator, O'Brien is renowned for playing with shapes and colour. He takes a design-led approach to illustration, not just creating art but also solving problems to satisfy his clients. www.bentheillustrator.com

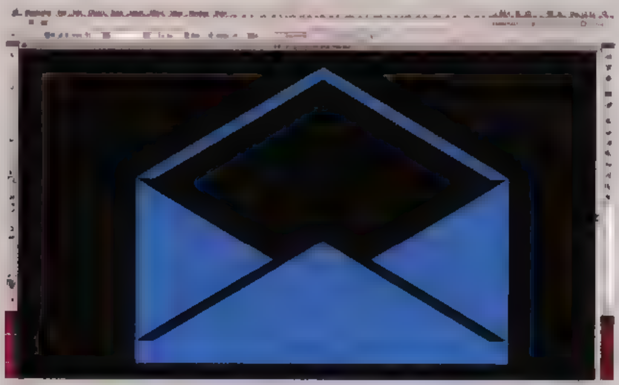
Video tutorial
You'll find the video tutorial at www.computerarts.co.uk/illustratoressentials

Time needed
10 minutes

Skills
- Use basic shapes to create icons or logos
- Take unwanted shapes away efficiently to leave negative spaces



04___ To create negative space or simply lose unwanted shapes, hold down Alt/Opt when you drag the Shape Builder tool. This will combine the shapes you drag across and delete them, leaving you with a compound path that incorporates the area of the deleted shape as negative space.



05___ In the Shape Builder Tool Options dialog you can also control your colour choice. Clicking the Cursor Swatch Preview box will give you a very handy little colour palette above your tool, which can be used (by scrolling left and right) to choose what colour a new shape will become after it's been combined with other shapes.

Video tutorial
Illustrator CS2 or later

Work with raster effects

Steven Bonner shows you how to make the most of Illustrator's raster options

Adobe introduced the ability to use raster effects in Illustrator CS2 and it's been improving ever since. Used sparingly, raster effects can help you achieve results in your Illustrator vectors that you'd normally have to cross over to Photoshop to get. If you experiment with them, they can add a dramatic difference and new dimension to your images – and so long as you take care not to overdo it, they can speed up your workflow.

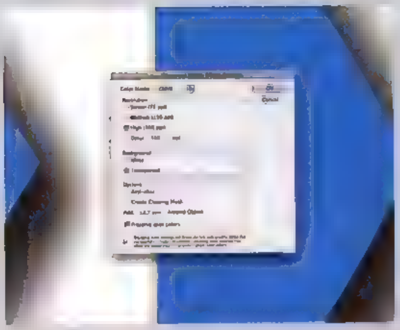
Be careful, though – if you use effects too heavily they'll slow down the application and the processing time will drive you crazy, so if you're looking to produce heavily layered raster work, Photoshop is still the place to do it. In this tutorial, I'll show you the basics of how to use raster effects to transform your vectors.

Steven Bonner
— Stirling-based Steven is a multi-disciplined designer and illustrator who works for clients like Nike, Penguin, Cadbury and Diesel. His love of type is evident throughout his work. www.stevenbonner.com

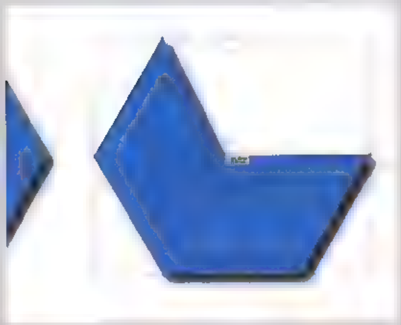
Video tutorial
You'll find the video tutorial at www.computerarts.co.uk/illustratoressentials

Time needed
10 minutes

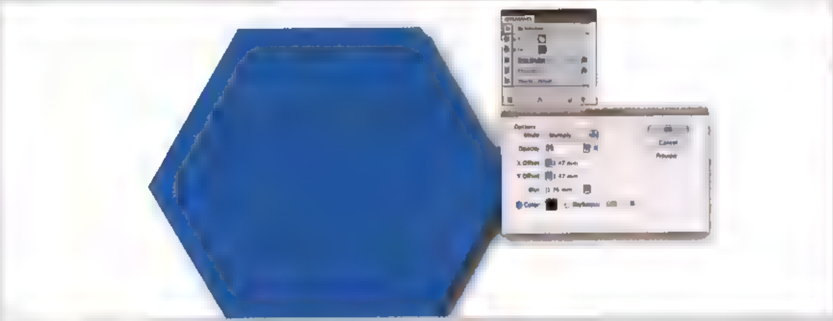
Skills
— Work with dynamic effects



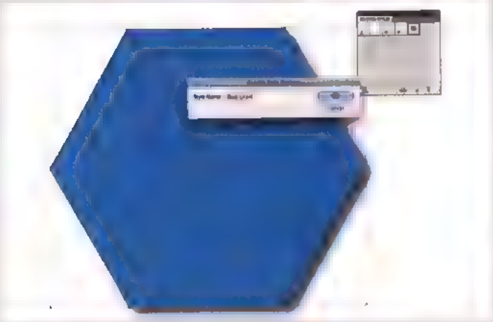
01 — The bedrock of creating clean raster effects in Illustrator is the Document Raster Effects Settings dialog, found under the Effect menu. The default setting is 72dpi, but in almost every situation you'll want to set this to at least 300dpi to ensure that the effects you add appear smooth and avoid that coarse, pixelated look you can get.



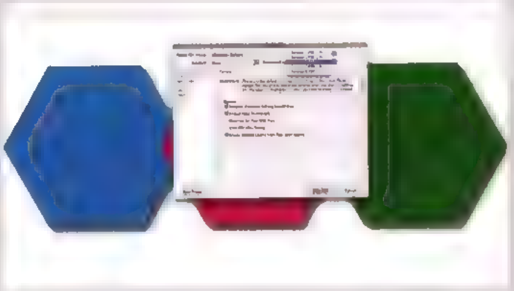
02 — Raster effects in Illustrator work in a similar fashion to using Smart Objects in Photoshop, and all elements remain editable when effects are applied. This means elements on the page will still behave like standard vector objects and you can select and control individual points to tweak your pieces – the raster effect will conform to the new shape dynamically.



03 — Illustrator has built-in raster options in the Effect>Stylise menu that work like the Layer Styles options within Photoshop. As well as vector-based settings like Rounded Corners and Scribble, you have the option to apply drop shadows, feather your edges or add inner and outer glows to your objects. As with other effects, these can be applied and will update automatically if you alter the shape. Note, however, that the effects will be lost if you use the Pathfinder to combine shapes. If you apply an effect and later want to adjust it, bring up the Appearance palette (Window>Appearance) and click on the one you need to alter to view its dialog box. From here you can edit the applied effect. If you try to do this via the original Effect menu, you'll add a new effect rather than editing the existing one.



04 — When you're planning your piece, sometimes you'll know which effects will be needed throughout the process, and will want to reapply certain effects or combinations of them several times over. To make this easy for you, raster effects can be applied as graphic styles in the same way as vector styles. Simply create a shape and apply the styles you want to use, then drag and drop it onto the Graphic Styles palette (Window>Graphic Styles). It will now be saved as a style. When you draw a new shape, keep it highlighted and then click on your style to apply it.



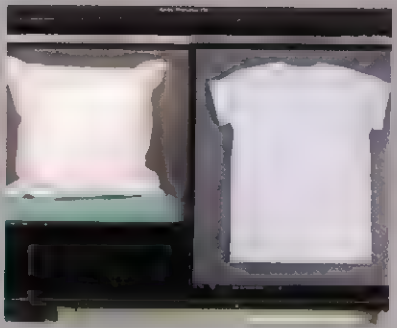
05 — Lastly, a quick word about outputting. If you do use raster effects in your images, make sure you output your final files so they're compatible with PDF versions 1.4 and above. In theory, they should be okay regardless, but it's been known for things to go awry in the conversion process. If you're using a new version of CS this won't be an issue, but in legacy versions, options to save as earlier file types may throw you off.

Video tutorial
Illustrator CS3 or later

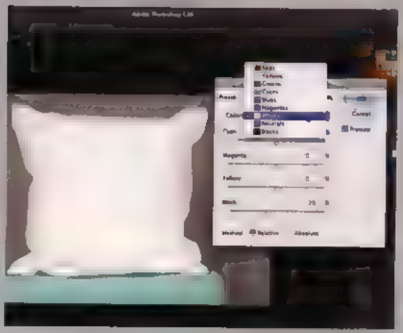
Breathe life into your pattern swatches

Becca Allen shows you how a few tools in Illustrator can turn a flat vector pattern swatch into a 3D object

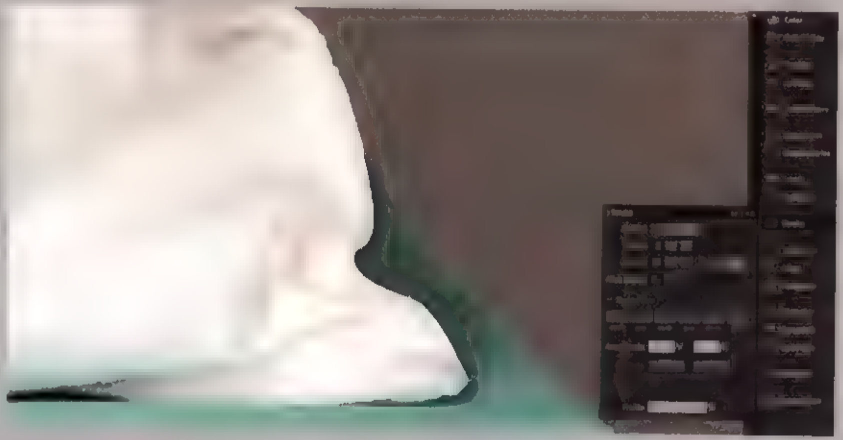
I've been asked many times how I apply pattern swatches to objects to make them look real and 3D. This tutorial will help you quickly apply your swatch or graphic to a garment so that you can judge whether it will work, and at what scale. This can be really useful when presenting your pattern swatches to printers or manufacturers, so that they can see how it should look. It's also a great way to showcase your pattern swatches on your website, even if you have no intention of printing them.



01___ White objects are best for mocking up your swatches, as you can overlay any colour and still get depth from the shading. Always photograph the object on a contrasting background so you can clearly see its outline. Use good lighting when doing so, and choose coloured paper and a grey background to ensure your pattern swatch stands out.



02___ When you have your photos ready, open them in Photoshop and adjust the contrast and levels until you're happy. If the white isn't bright enough after being shot, go to Image>Adjustments> Selective Colour. Select the whites, and lower the percentage of black. When you're happy with the lighting, save your images as JPEGs and reopen them in Illustrator.



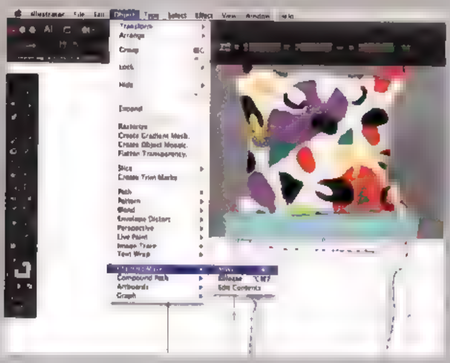
03___ I'm using two photos here: a T-shirt and a cushion. Both items are great for applying pattern swatches. Lock both items in place and select the Pen too. Zoom into your first photo so you can clearly see the detailed outline of the object. Using the Pen tool on Outline and a 0.25pt stroke weight, carefully draw around the outside of your object. I find the Pen tool in Illustrator is much easier to use than Photoshop's.

Becca Allen
__ Allen is a freelance designer and illustrator. She's also a womenswear designer for Rhythm Livin EU, where she sees the design process through from initial idea to finished article. She specialises in graphics, all-over-prints and trims. www.beccaallen.co.uk

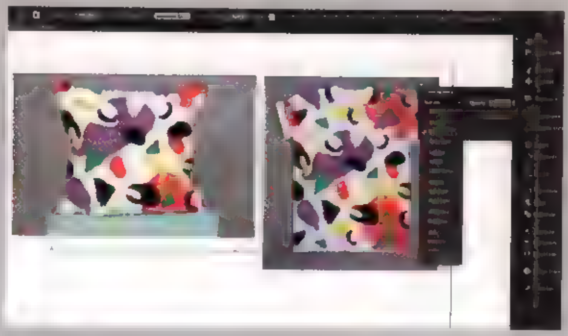
Time needed
10 minutes

Video tutorial
You'll find the video tutorial at www.computerarts.co.uk/illustratoressentials

Skills
- Create quick clipping masks
- Use the Pen tool for precise tracing
- Apply pattern swatches and transparency effects



04___ When you've finished the outline of the object, switch the outline into a fill. You now have two options: you can either apply your pattern swatch to the fill; or duplicate your filled shape, select both the original shape and photo, and use Cmd/Ctrl+7 to create a clipping mask and eliminate the background. You can then add your pattern swatch to the duplicated shape and overlay this on the clipping mask. This option leaves you with just the object – no background.



05___ To make the object look 3D, now apply a transparency effect to the pattern-filled object. Select the Transparency option from the toolbar, and apply Multiply from the drop-down menu. When you're happy with the way your pattern swatch looks on the object, save the file. I then paste mine into Photoshop and adjust the sizing and pixels for web, but what you do next depends on what your final outcome is.

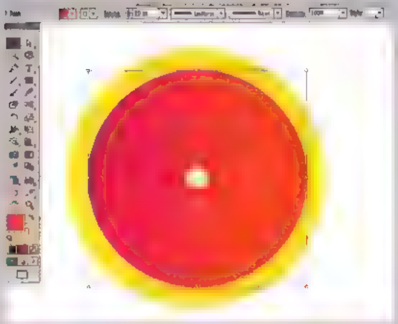
Video tutorial
Any version of Illustrator

Five pro time-savers in Illustrator

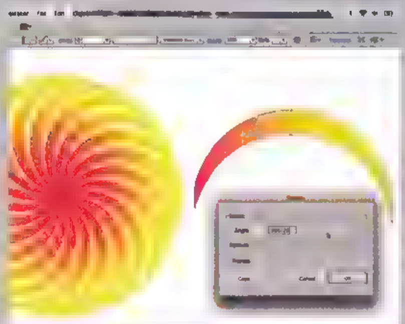
Luke O'Neill runs through five of his essential keyboard shortcuts for maximising productivity during a project

Time is of the essence in any profession these days, but nowhere is this more apparent than in the high-speed, deadline dominated world of the creative industries. With lead times on projects becoming shorter and shorter, it's imperative that you can think and work quickly, and get your ideas down fast.

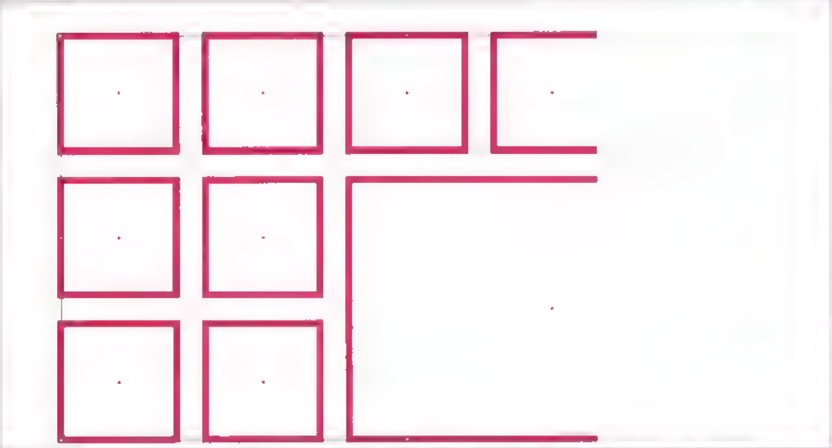
Making sure that you're in complete command of your machine is paramount to achieving this, and learning some of the basic keyboard shortcuts for the core programs is essential for any creative working today. Through this tutorial I'll run through some basic but essential Illustrator keyboard shortcuts that will hopefully become second nature, enabling you to create without the need to navigate endless menus and panels.



01 Often when you're colouring objects in Illustrator you'll have the stroke selected instead of the fill or vice-versa, and end up colouring the wrong thing and having to navigate to the Swatches panel. To quickly toggle between the two simply hit Shift+X. This also works with an object selected, enabling you to switch between the two on the fly.



02 It's easy to quickly create very precise radial effects from one object. With the object selected simply hit the R key (for rotate) and, holding Opt/Alt, select a centre point for the rotation. In the dialog box, enter a fraction, such as 360/20. Preview the result, hit copy, and then Cmd/Ctrl+D to duplicate the shape and create your radial effect.



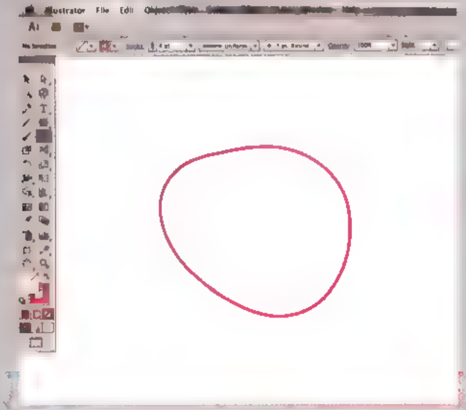
03 A very useful shortcut gives you the ability to make guides from any vector object simply by selecting the shape and hitting Cmd/Ctrl+5. This can be a very quick way to set up guides or basic grid systems. To release the guide and revert back to the vector object, simply hold Cmd/Ctrl+shift and double-click the guides.

Luke O'Neill
A northern designer and illustrator living and working in London as Art Editor for T3 magazine. He has a penchant for clean, black lines and has been known to partake in impromptu experimental dance sessions after a shandy or two.
www.lukeoneill.co.uk

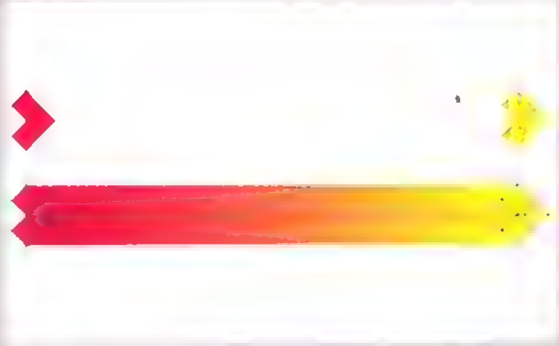
Time needed
10 minutes

Video tutorial
You'll find the video tutorial at www.computerarts.co.uk/illustratoressentials

Skills
- Learn the basics to quickly speed up workflow
- Create girds from objects
- Blending in an instant



04 This one is very simple, but also a great time-saver when drawing loosely with the Pencil tool. To close a path when drawing, simply hold down Opt/Alt when you're about to finish drawing and the path will automatically close, enabling you to carry on without the need to manually join up the two end points.



05 Finally, to quickly create a blend between two objects, simply select both objects and hit Cmd/Ctrl+B to create a blend between the two. If the appearance of both objects are the same, then by default the blend will be made in specified steps. If they are different colours then a smooth colour blend will be made, as shown above.

Video tutorial
Illustrator CS5 or later

Create a colour group with the Live Color tool

Lee Barnes shows you how to create and edit colour groups with the Live Color tool

As enjoyable as it might be, choosing a colour palette for a new brand or design can prove time-consuming. Help is at hand with Illustrator's Live Color tool, which streamlines the design process by enabling designers to choose groups of colours that work well together.

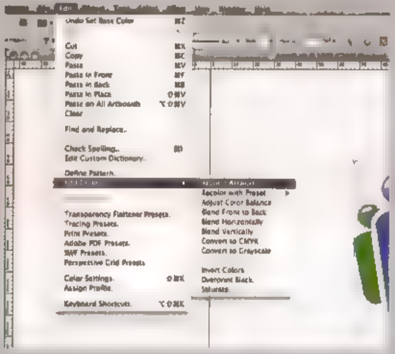
In this tutorial, I'll demonstrate how you can use the Live Color tool to create a colour group for a logo or brand mark. One of the many benefits of working with this tool is that it's able to suggest colours that complement or contrast your selections based on colour harmony rules, enabling you to achieve strong colour palettes quickly and easily.

Lee Barnes
__Lee Barnes is a designer at Intermarketing Agency, Leeds, where he works for clients such as Adidas and UGG Australia. www.akabarney.co.uk

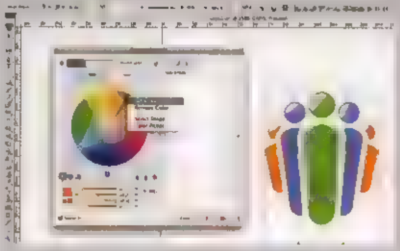
Time needed
10 minutes

Video tutorial
You'll find the video tutorial at www.computerarts.co.uk/illustratoressentials

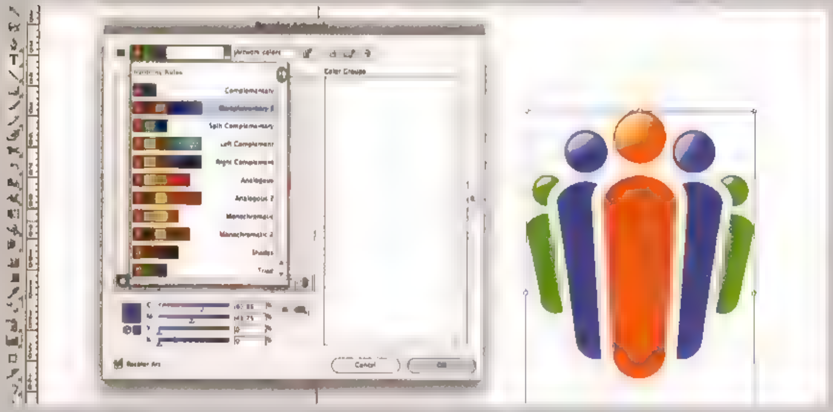
Skills
__Use the Live Color tool
__Create different colour palettes


Undo Set Base Color
Cut
Copy
Paste
Paste in Front
Paste in Back
Paste in Place
Paste on All Artboards
Clear
Find and Replace...
Check Spelling...
Edit Custom Dictionary...
Define Pattern...
Recolor with Preset
Adjust Color Balance
Blend Front to Back
Blend Horizontally
Blend Vertically
Convert to CMYK
Convert to Grayscale
Transparency Flattener Presets...
Tracing Presets...
Print Presets...
Adobe PDF Presets...
SWF Presets...
Perspective Grid Presets...
Invert Colors
Overprint Black...
Saturate...
Color Settings...
Assign Profile...
Keyboard Shortcuts...

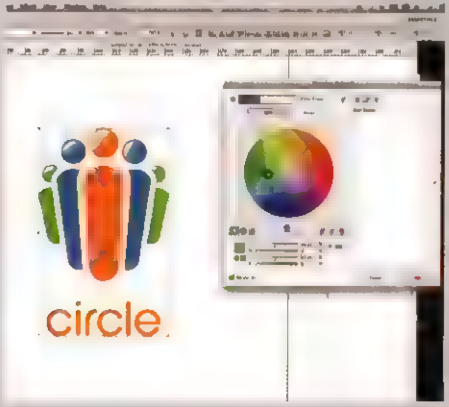
01__ Create a simple logo or vector graphic using shapes of different colours. Decide on a key colour to be featured in the logo – for example, if you want to achieve an industrial feel, pick a cold grey or blue. Select your logo and bring up the Live Color panel by going to Edit>Edit Colours>Recolour Artwork.



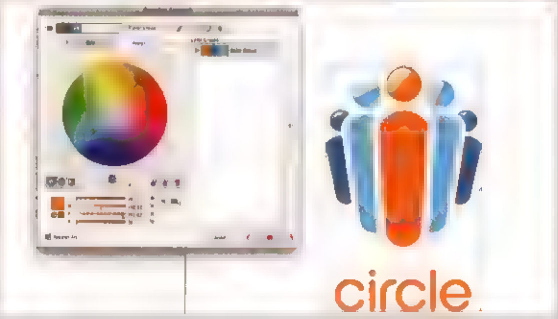
02__ With the Live Color panel open, click on the Edit tab to bring up the colour wheel. Here you can see the colours in your group, highlighted with circular anchors. The largest of the anchors indicates your key colour. Make sure your base colour is assigned by Ctrl/right-clicking it and selecting 'Set as Base Colour'. Note that you can manually change the colours with the CMYK sliders at the bottom of the panel, and limit colour selections to Pantone swatches or web-safe colours.


Complementary
Split Complementary
Left Complement
Right Complement
Analogous
Analogous 2
Monochromatic
Monochromatic 2
Shades
Triad
Color Groups
Cancel
OK

03__ With your base colour set, click on the drop-down arrow to the top-left of the panel. This brings up a number of colour groups based on the harmony rules of your base colour. At this point you can select a group of your choice (with the option to tweak it later) or create your own group. In my example, I'm using complementary colours at the opposite side of the colour wheel. Once you make a selection you can alter it by clicking the 'Add or Remove Colour' command at the bottom-right of the wheel.



04__ There are several ways to edit the colours within your group. You can click and drag the key colour anchor to alter the group's hue and saturation as one, or select anchors individually and drag to change them. Note that the other colours will change in accordance with your new selection unless you select the Unlink Harmony Colours box at the bottom right of the wheel.



05__ Tweak the colours according to your preference, using the colour harmonies as a guide. Once you're happy with the group, click the New Colour Group button and hit OK to apply the colours to your artwork. Note that the colour group appears in the Swatches panel next to a folder icon. If you double-click the folder icon, you'll find that you're able to edit the colour group.

Video tutorial
Illustrator CS5 or later

Easy shape building in Illustrator

Luke O'Neill shows you how to quickly and easily create and adapt a collection of vector shapes

To the uninitiated, Illustrator can sometimes appear a little daunting with all its precise tools and seemingly complicated ways of doing things. Unlike Photoshop, where it's possible to feel your way around to a certain extent, with Illustrator there is often only one way of achieving a certain result – and it can't be bullied into doing what you want in the same way that Photoshop often can.

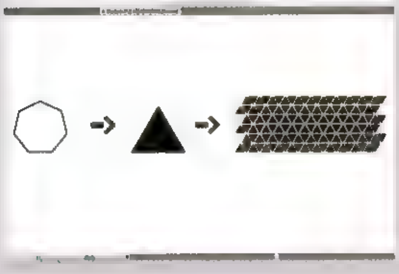
Through the next five steps, I'll run through the basics of creating and adapting vector shapes in Illustrator and how you can quickly populate a design with a number of varied elements. From the basics of the different shape tools, through shape-building and on to pattern creation, there should be some tricks in the next five steps that will benefit Illustrator users of all abilities

Luke O'Neill
__A northern designer and illustrator living in London. He has a penchant for clean, black lines and has been known to partake in impromptu experimental dance sessions after a shandy or two. www.lukeoneill.co.uk

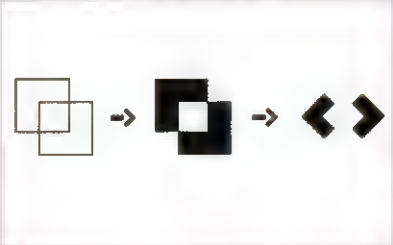
Time needed
10 minutes

Video tutorial
You'll find the video tutorial at www.computerarts.co.uk/illustratoressentials

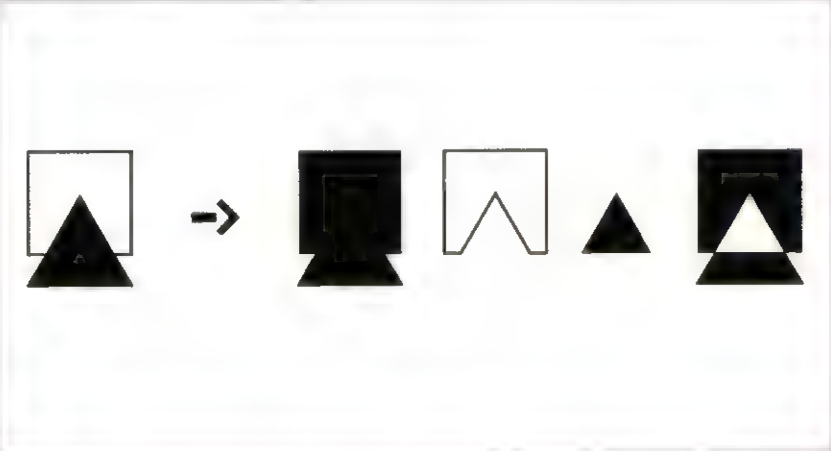
Skills
__Shape building
__Use the Pathfinder
__Create patterns



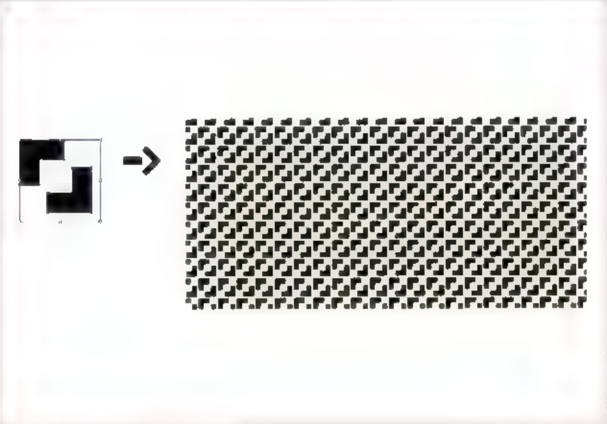
01____ Everyone knows how to use the basic shape tools. However, you might not know that if you use the up and down cursor keys in conjunction with both the Polygon and Star shapes, you can increase or decrease the number of sides. Reducing both right down will result in a triangle. It's then easy to duplicate this by holding Alt and rotate it by hitting R to create a quick geometric pattern.



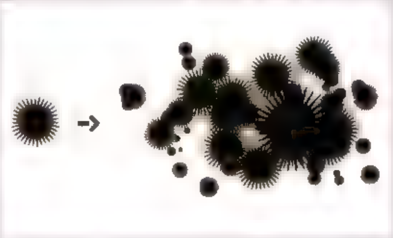
02____ A relatively new addition to Illustrator, the Shape Builder tool lets you quickly and easily build simple shapes without the need for the Pathfinder. In the above example I have drawn two overlapping squares and then, with the Shape Builder tool, simply subtracted the central overlap by holding Alt and clicking to subtract it, resulting in two simple arrow shapes.



03____ For many, myself included, the Pathfinder panel is used to build most shapes in Illustrator. A whole tutorial could be written on the Pathfinder alone: it enables shapes to be edited in many different and unique ways, and is only limited by your imagination. I've played around here with a triangle shape overlapping a square, using the basic Shape modes: Unite, Minus Front, Intersect and Exclude.



04____ Once you have created some simple shapes, it's easy to populate your design with them using Pattern Swatches. Above I've taken the basic shape from step 02 and added a white box behind it that extends equidistant to the right and below. This is so that there will be a gap between the objects in the pattern. Now simply drag it into the Swatches panel, draw a new shape and fill it with the pattern swatch.



05____ Another way to distribute shapes around a design is to use the Symbol Sprayer tool. This shape was created from the Star shape, by increasing the number of sides using the cursor keys. I dragged it into the Symbols panel and liberally sprayed it using the Symbol Sprayer tool. It's easy to alter the size of the symbol instances using the Symbol Sizer tool.

Illustrator
Essentials

Discover new Illustrator skills with these tutorials from leading creative professionals

CREATE SHAPES FASTER! 66
Jonny Wan explains how to meet tight deadlines by mastering the Pathfinder panel in Illustrator

LAYER UP VECTORS 68
Cover artist Tom Mac reveals how to create a drip-effect portrait using the Pen tool and object layering techniques

INTEGRATE CHARACTERS INTO YOUR WORK 72
Junichi Tsuneoka walks through how to incorporate your character designs with custom type to create a two colour poster

COOL PAPERCUT AESTHETICS 76
Steven Bonner shows you how to digitally replicate a 3D papercut style using Illustrator's native tools

CREATE A MULTI-USE PATTERN 80
Fernando Volken Togni shares his pro technique for designing a four-colour repeat pattern

ISOMETRIC GRID-BASED LETTERING 84
We show you the possibilities of an isometric grid by creating a custom 3D typeface

FLOURESCENT TRANSPARENCY 88
Ben the Illustrator explains how to use transparency and gradient tools to bring a dynamic creative edge to your work

PREPARE A DIELINE 90
Honey Creative's head of production Duncan Eldridge reveals his process for getting packaging ready for print

MASTER INNER GLOW 94
Siggi Odds walks through a time-saving technique for adding shadows and highlights to your illustration work

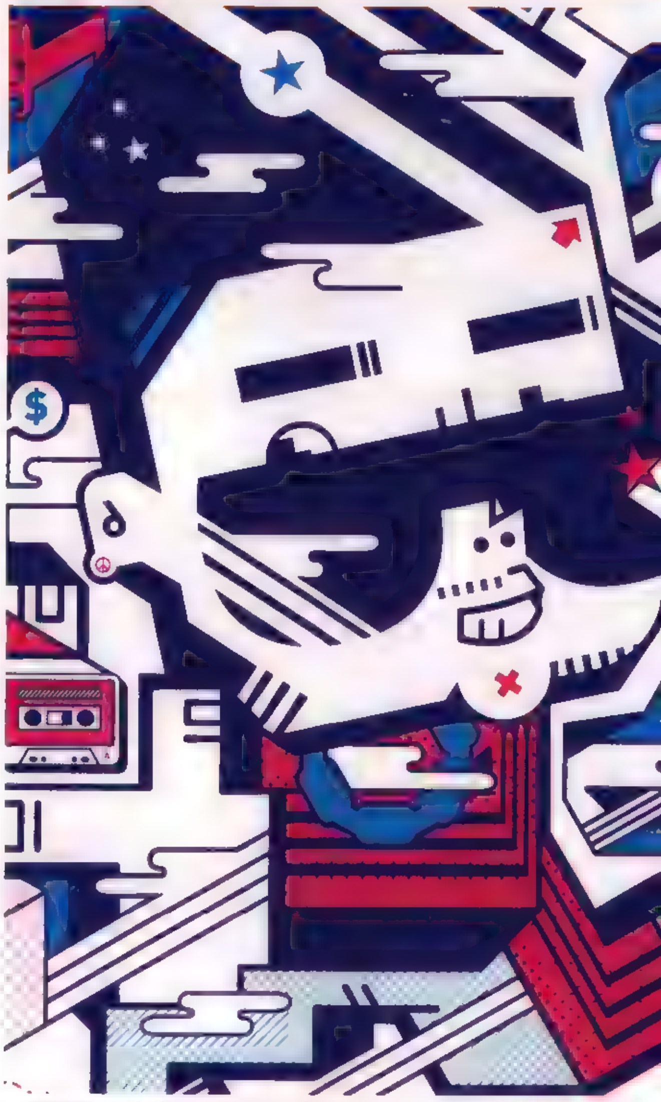
DESIGN A BRANDING SOLUTION 98
Sebastián Litmanovich reveals how to create a range of original branding elements from a logo design

CONSTRUCT A TYPE BASED IDENTITY 102
Ruben Pater from Lava explains how designing a custom typeface can work for an identity

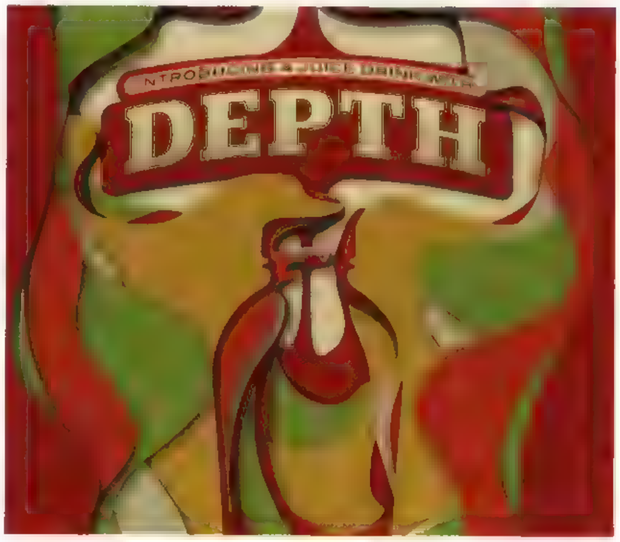
CREATE A MODULAR GRID SYSTEM 106
Mark Bloom walks through how to create a flexible modular grid system that will change the way you approach design

ADD DEPTH AND TEXTURE 110
Jeffrey Bowman explains how to use grids, gradients and textures to add depth to your illustrations

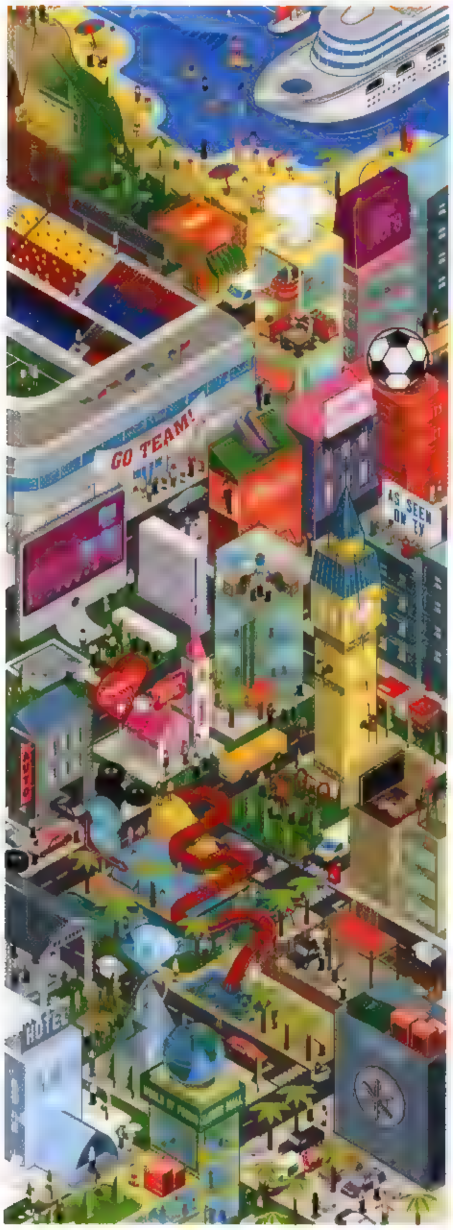
CREATE A 3D CUSTOM MAP 114
Radio explains how to create isometric icons using a grid and the 3D Extrude tool



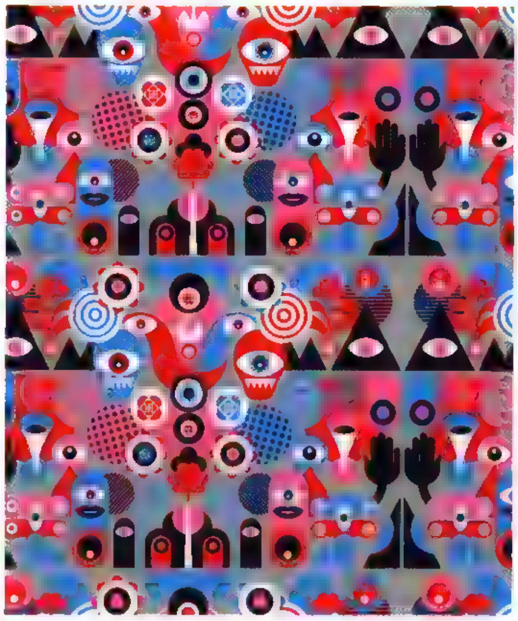
Integrate characters into your work **Page 72**



Papercut aesthetics in Illustrator **Page 76**


GO TEAM!
AS SEEN ON TV
HOTEL

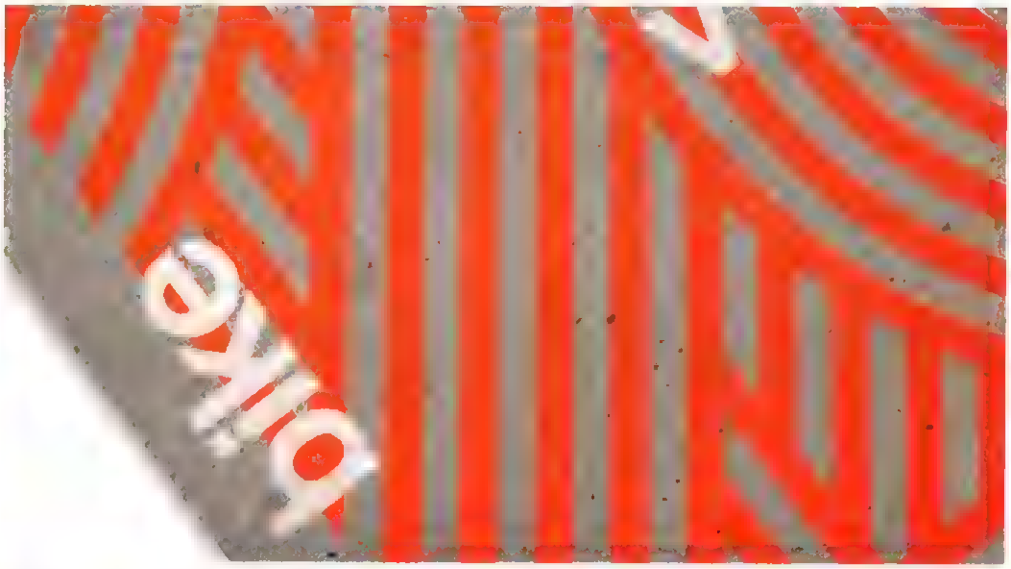
Create a custom 3D map _**Page 68**



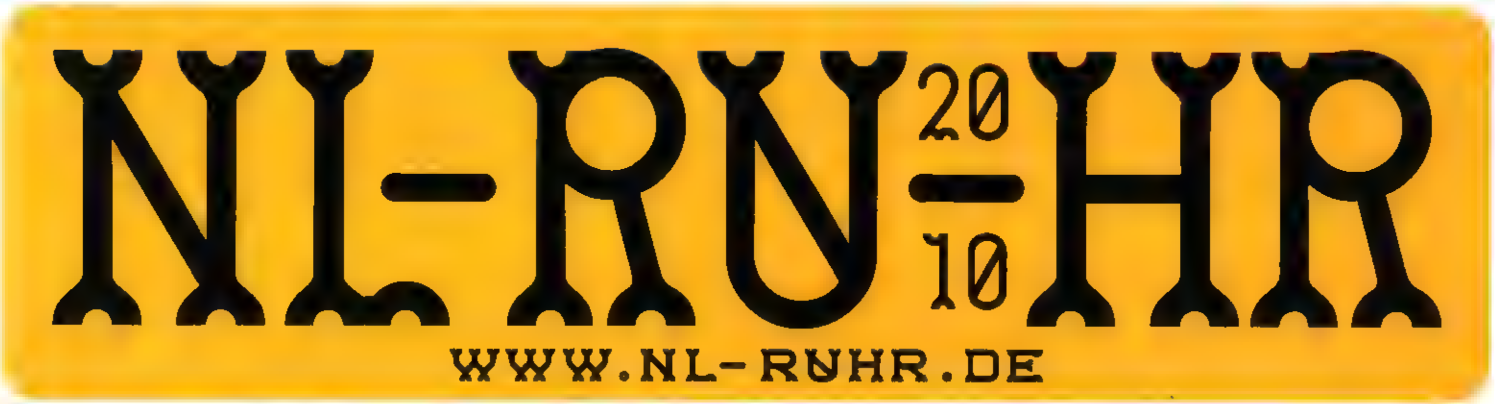
Create a multi-use pattern _**Page 80**

New!
3of 5a day
TESCO
MEAT & VEG
SMOKY CHICKEN & PRAWN
GUMBO
Each pack contains

Prepare a dieline for production _**Page 90**



Create a modular grid system _**Page 106**


NL-RUHR
2010
WWW.NL-RUHR.DE

Construct a type based identity _**Page 102**

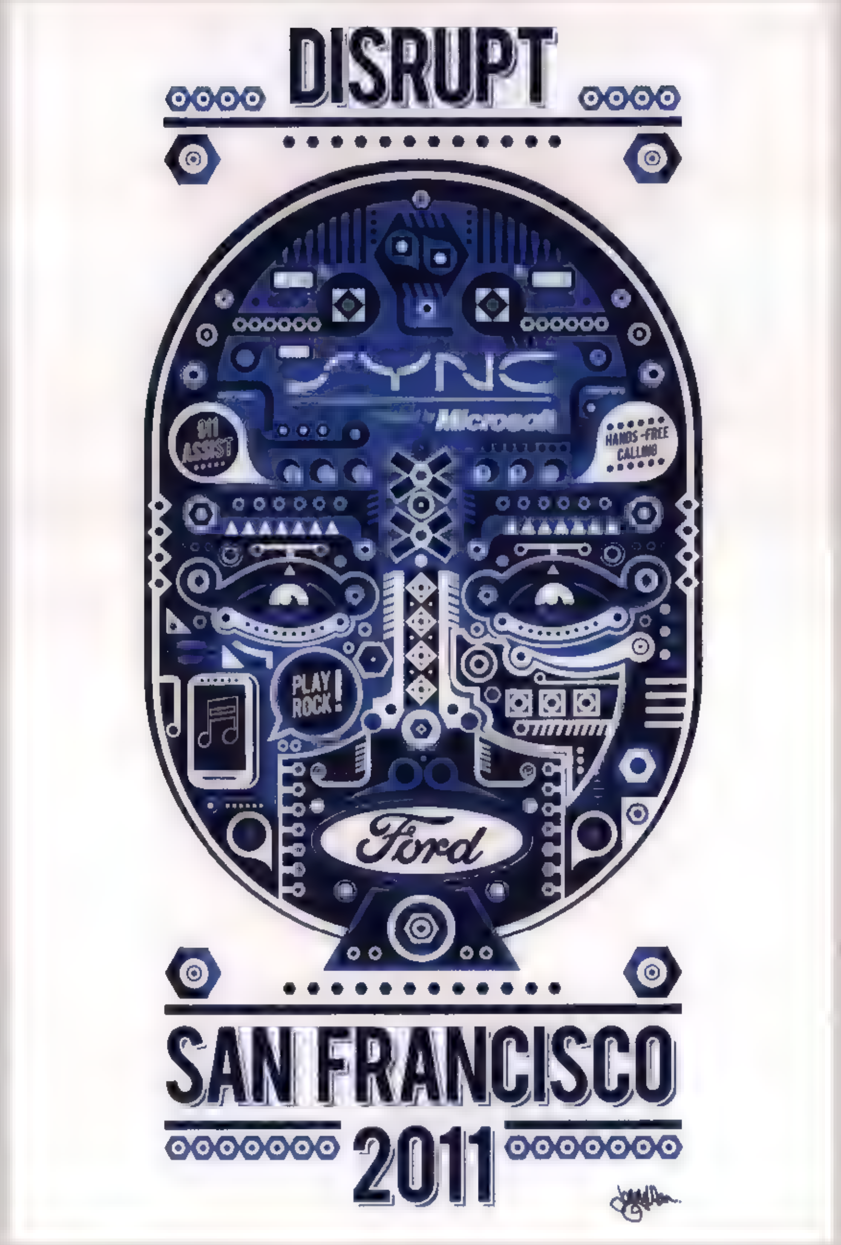
Any version of Illustrator

Create shapes faster

Jonny Wan explains how to meet tight deadlines by mastering the Pathfinder panel

Every illustrator will have experienced the pressures of a last-minute job – the one that comes in at the end of a Friday afternoon and is due to be signed-off first thing Monday morning. It's at times like these where you really need to be aware of all the tools at your disposal in Illustrator that can help save you time. In this walkthrough we'll be using a recent promotional poster that I created for Ford, looking at how the Pathfinder panel played a key part in speeding up my workflow, giving me more time to incorporate client feedback and amendments.

The Pathfinder panel is the quickest and most efficient way of manipulating paths and shapes, providing you are clear as to the outcomes of each action. Mastering the tools on offer can make creating the most complex shapes almost instantaneous. By the end of this tutorial you'll have a good grasp of the basics, and be able to develop and incorporate these skills into your own workflow.

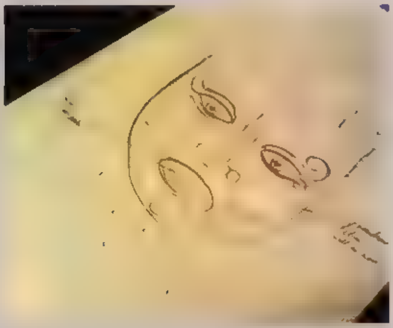


Jonny Wan
— Since graduating in 2008, Manchester-based illustrator Jonny has worked with clients including Nokia, DDB London, Microsoft and Urban Outfitters across fashion, advertising, editorial, product design and more. www.jonnywan.com

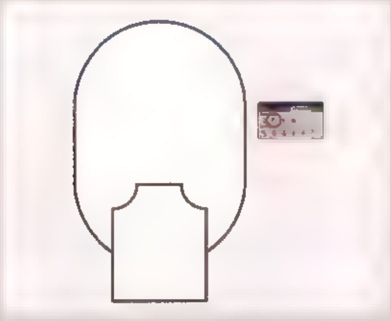
Time needed
3-5 hours

Assets
You'll find the full size screengrabs for each step of this project at www.computerarts.co.uk/illustratoressentials

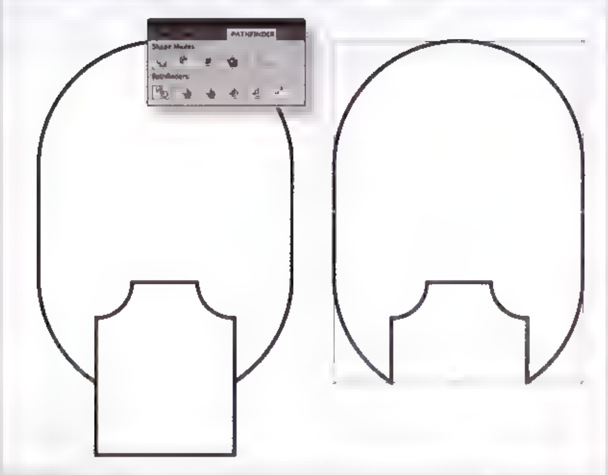
Skills
- Master the Pathfinder panel
- Colour multiple objects with the Magic Wand
- Use the Align and Distribute tools



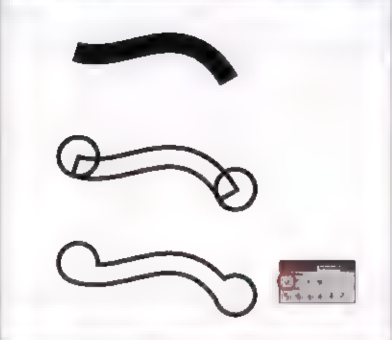
01___Here's the rough sketch that I sent to the client for some immediate feedback. This mainly serves to confirm the art direction that you're heading in, before you start working digitally. It's also a great opportunity to reassure the client that you're reliable, and provides an opportunity to clear up any questions about the brief.



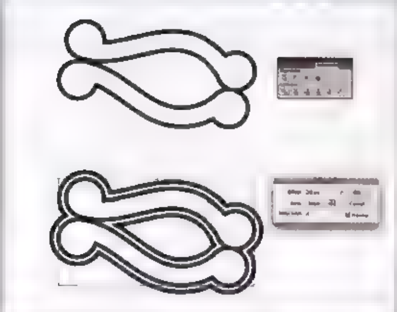
02___Using the Pen tool, begin creating the linework. For this image, use the Pathfinder panel (Window> Pathfinder) to subtract the lower portion of the face where the lips will go. Create the shape for the mouth area and place it where relevant. Now select both shapes and click the Minus Front command from the Shape mode in the Pathfinder panel.



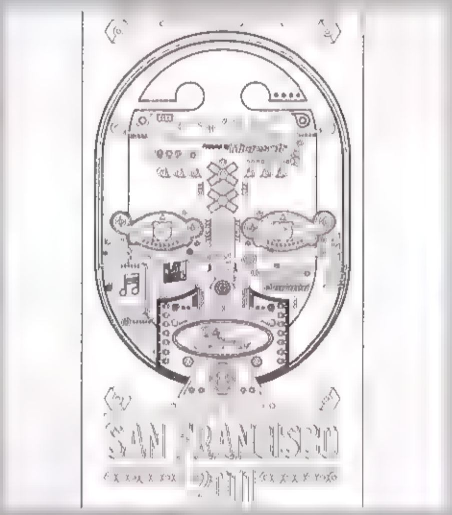
03 The Minus Front command will take anything on top of the backmost item and remove it – like a cookie-cutter. Make sure the shape you want to 'cut out' is on top in the Layers panel.



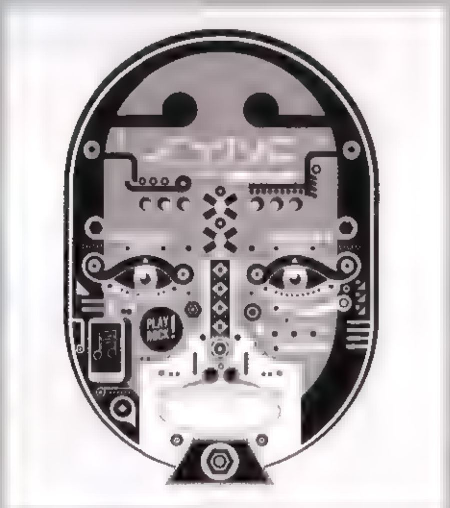
04 Next, use the Pen tool to create the brim of the eye and expand it so that only the outline stroke is left. Now create two circles and place them either side of the path. Select all the shapes and hit Merge in the Pathfinder panel. As the name suggests, all the items will merge into one complete shape.



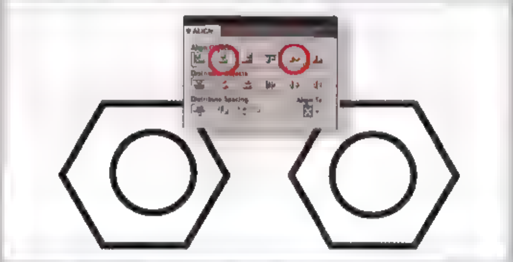
05 Reflect the shape created in step four, and rotate it into place so that it's looking more like an eye. To create a border around the eye and the area where the pupil will sit, merge both parts of the eye and create an offset path (Object> Path>Offset Path) of 20px. Carry on combining shapes until all the main features of the face are done.



06 Now that we've explored the Minus Front and Merge commands, we can use these tools to build up the other main features of the image, and add the relevant logos and type. For the detail, I took some shapes from my personal library and implemented them as placeholders.



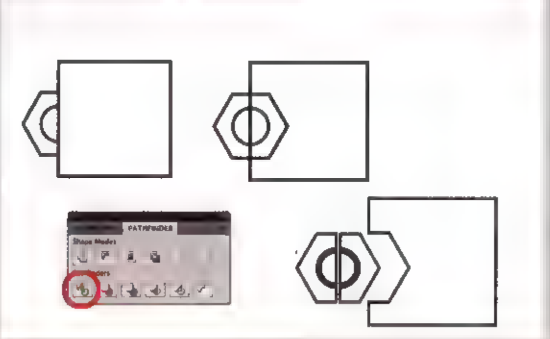
07 The next step is to add a bit of colour before sending it off to be proofed. Be wary of committing to colours early on if you don't know what kind of palette the client will favour. I often stick to a few greyscale shades to add a bit of depth, making it easier for the client to assess.



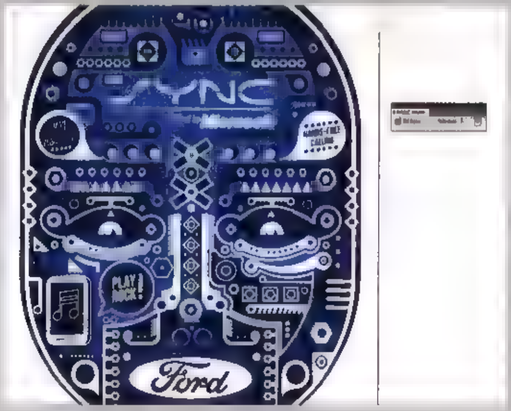
08 In this brief, the feedback that I received from the client resulted in the need for heavier detail and more mechanically inspired shapes, so I began creating simple shapes inspired by nuts and bolts. For these, use the Shape tool to draw a hexagon, and then draw a smaller circle and use the Align and Distribute panels to make sure that they are evenly spaced vertically and horizontally.

KNOW THE BRIEF

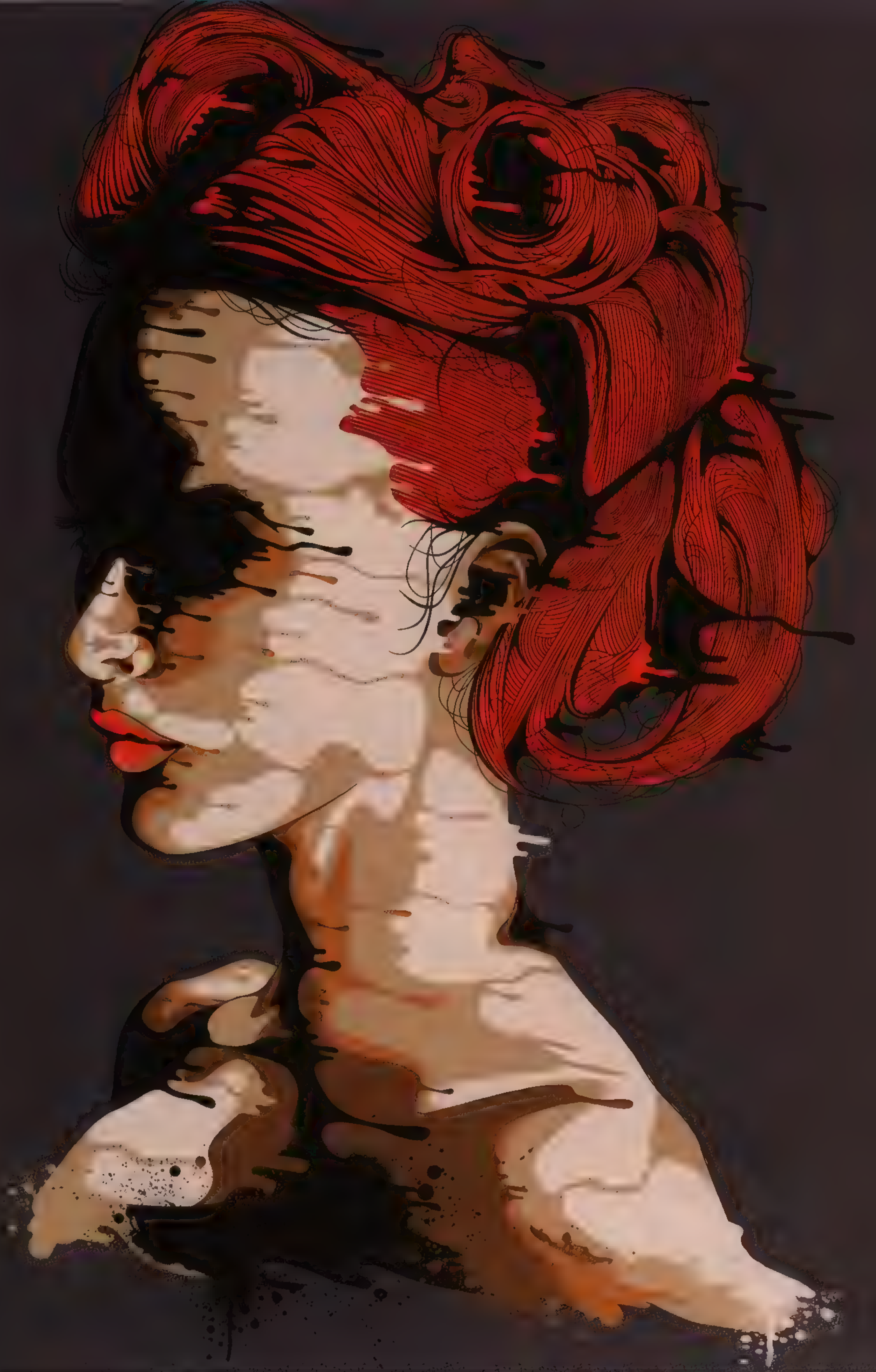
When timing is of the essence, it's important to get all the little details confirmed and out of the way. This can simply mean double-checking the timings, dimensions and quantity of deliverables, and just involves a quick phone call to the client to clear up any questions or queries you might have about the brief. This will save any confusion later, as everyone is on the same page.



09 Now use the Shape tool to draw a square, making sure one of its sides is piercing through the shape created in step eight. Select all, and click the Divide tool. This will break the objects up into smaller pieces. I've moved the pieces away from each other to show how the shape is broken down.



10 After you've created all the necessary shapes, start implementing them within the design. Finally, add colour: a quick way of colouring is to use the Magic Wand tool. By selecting this tool and clicking on an area of colour, you'll select every shape that has the same colour, enabling you to re-colour multiple objects at once and save time.



Illustrator CS3 or later

Layer up vectors for unique effects

Tom Mac reveals how to create a drip-effect portrait using the Pen tool and object layering techniques

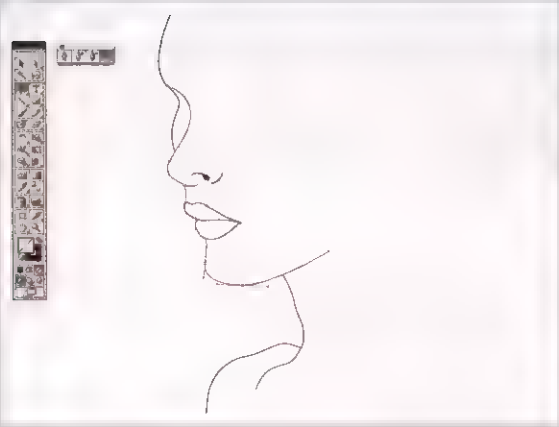
The portrait idea is as old as the hills, and in this competitive digital age it's vital to add your own unique styles and twists to grab attention. In this tutorial I'll walk you through how to create an unusual multi-layered, drip-effect portrait. We'll cover the basics of the Pen tool, using a limited colour palette and effective layering techniques to create an original portrait. Once you've got the basics nailed, you can apply them to create complex, in-depth and individual-looking imagery.

Tom Mac
— Illustrator Tom is responsible for this issue's stunning cover. He has also freelanced for a range of clients and studios, including Shotopop and AnyForty www.tommacdraws.co.uk

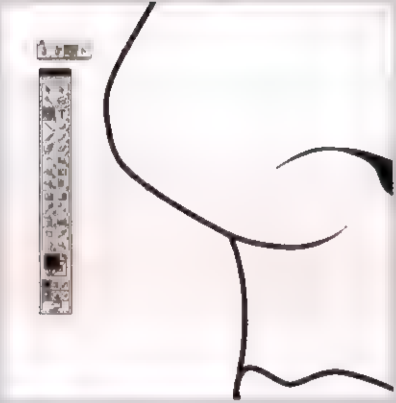
Time needed
3-6 hours

Assets
You'll find the full size screengrabs for each step of this project at www.computerarts.co.uk/illustratoressentials

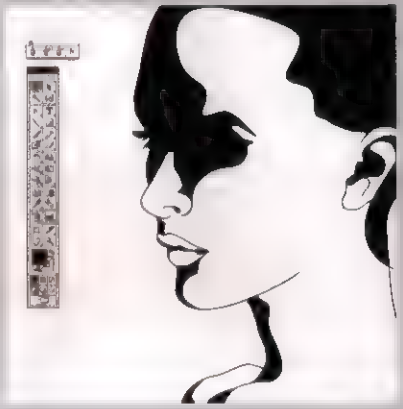
Skills
- Manipulate the Pen tool
- Use strokes to produce unique results
- Work with a limited palette



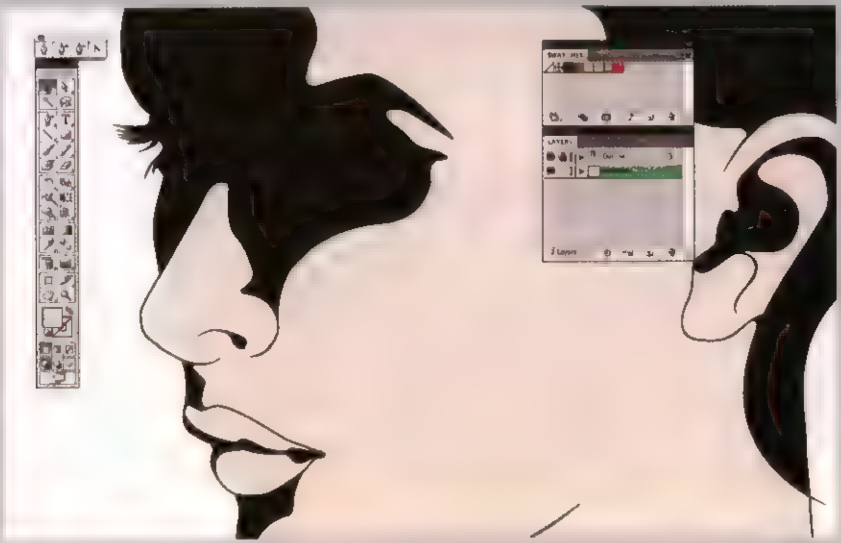
01——First, create an outline for your portrait. Use the Pen tool to mark out the individual points, and the Convert Anchor Point tool to get your curves as smooth as you can. I'm working on an A3 document with the Stroke Weight at 0.5. Don't feel as though your outline has to be perfect straight away – each object can be tweaked or manipulated at any time.



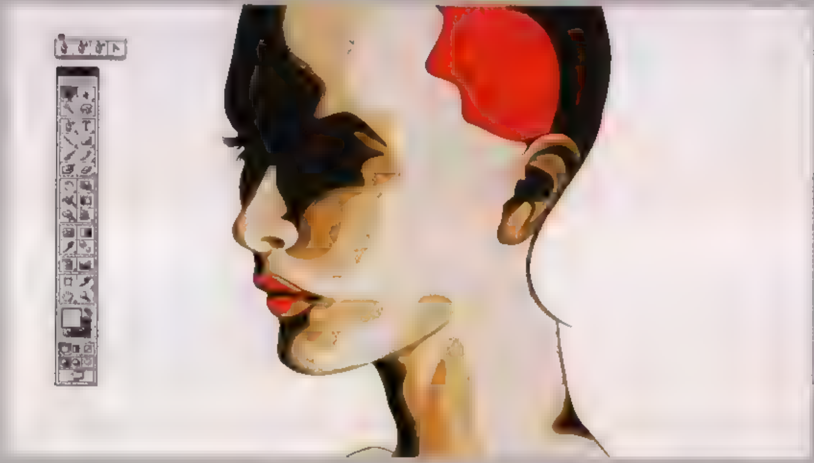
02——Once you're happy with the general positioning of the outline, it's important to make sure the strokes are expanded to avoid distortion if any size changes are made during the process. You can do this by selecting the stroke, then going to Object>Expand. When this is done, get rid of the unattractive flat ends by removing points with the Delete Anchor Point tool.



03——What the image needs now is some darker areas. Using the Pen tool, create solid fills of colour, adding details such as eyelashes. Try not to go too over the top with this by keeping an even balance of light and dark areas – you don't want to swamp your image either way. Don't forget that you can come back to these at any point to add, take away or manipulate as you please.



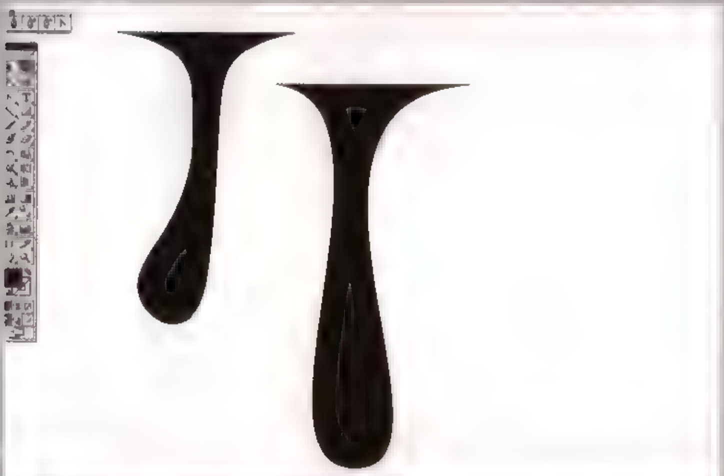
04——Now that the basic design is complete, it's time to choose a colour palette. I'd suggest keeping this minimal. I've gone for one dark colour and four lighter variations of it. I've also chosen one bright colour to complement the duller ones. Once these are selected, lock the layer you've been working on. Create a new layer and, using the Pen tool, create a colour fill underneath the image. It always helps to name your layers. ›



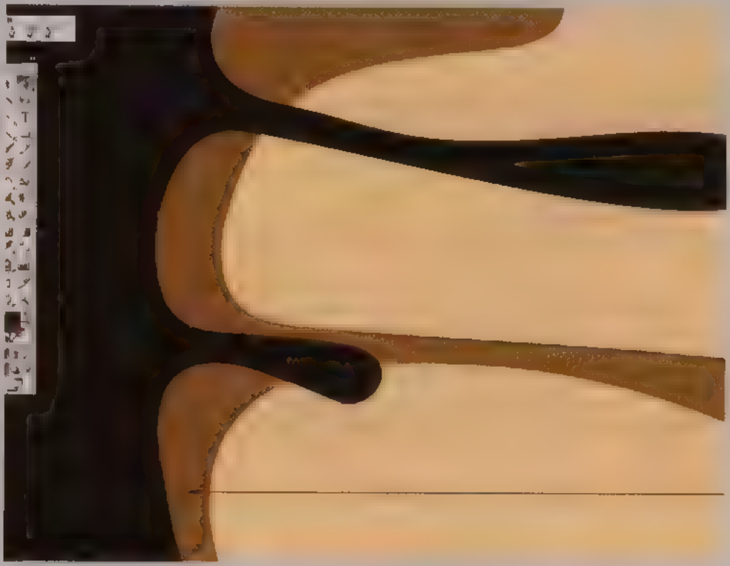
05___It's now time to start adding more detailed shading, using the remaining tones of colour. Lock off the layer you're on and create a new one in between the two. From here you're free to really build up your shading without interrupting anything else on the canvas. Try to keep the shapes fluid with those that already exist. You can position the blocks of colour above and below each other by Arrange>Send Backward/Bring Forward (or Ctrl/Cmd+[/].

REFERENCE MATERIAL

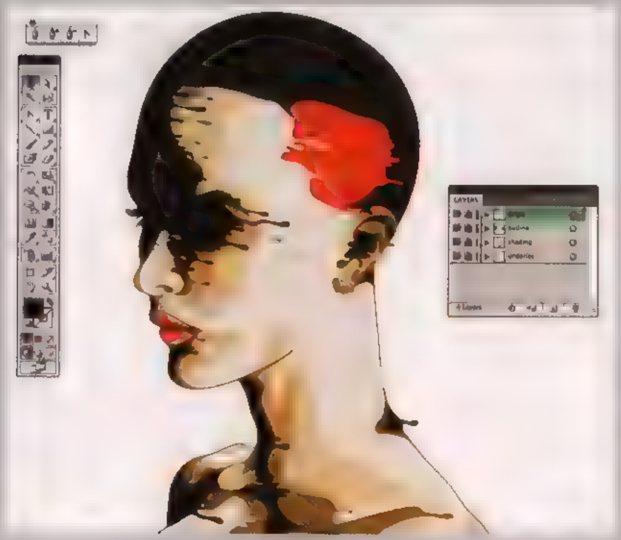
Don't feel that you have to create the portrait entirely from your imagination. With Illustrator it often helps to work from a sketch or photo – just make sure that you're aware of copyright issues if the photograph isn't yours



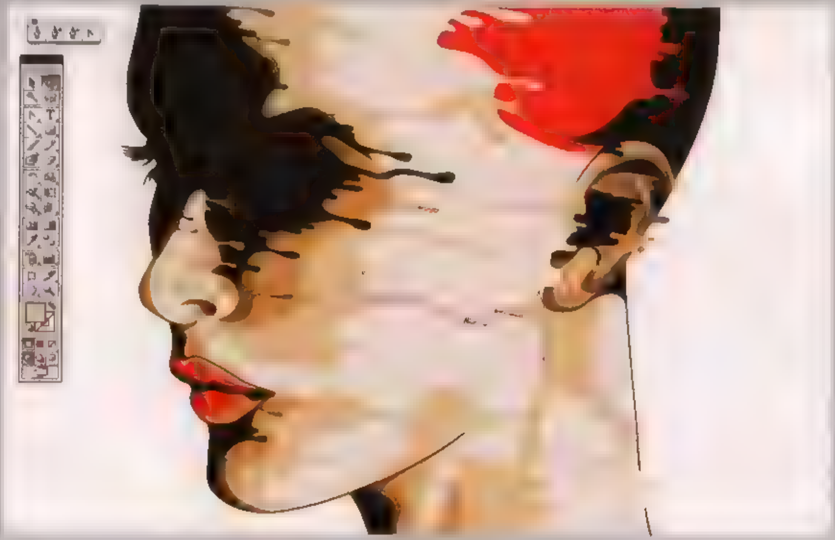
06___The drips are very simple to create. With the Pen tool, make a three-point triangle, then pull the middle point out with the Convert Anchor Point tool and push the remaining two points inwards to create the curves. Be as experimental as you want with this, adding more points to manipulate the shape. Alternatively, use a tablet – this will give a more freehand feel. I've used a combination of the two here.



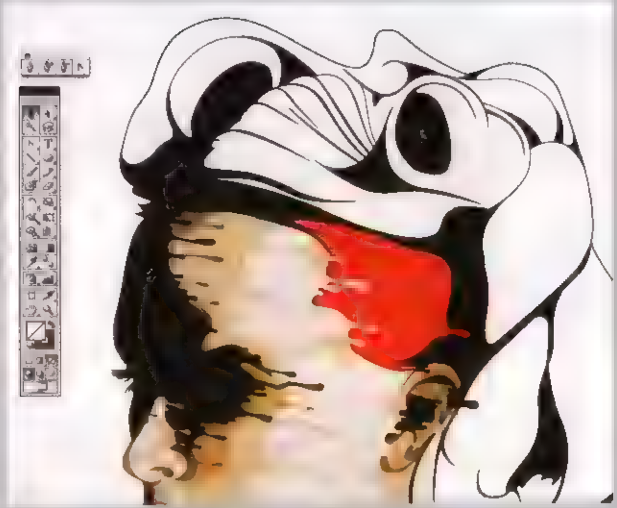
07___To keep a fluid feel, the drips must work with the shading perfectly, creating a smooth joining curve. Add more Bézier points to the base of each drip to achieve this, if you have to.



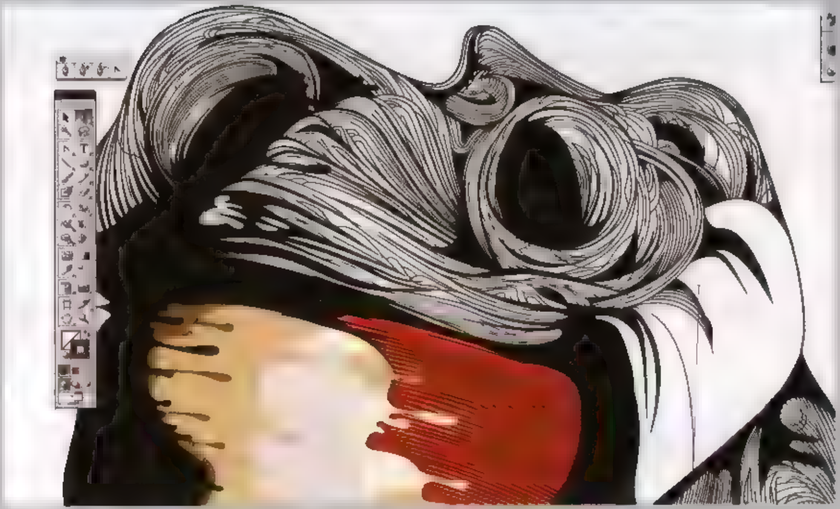
08___Now it's time to go crazy with the drips. Create a new top layer and begin to overlay them onto the different shades. For the best results, each drip should be created individually. However, you can duplicate each one if you wish, making sure you merge them correctly with the line they'll be sitting on.



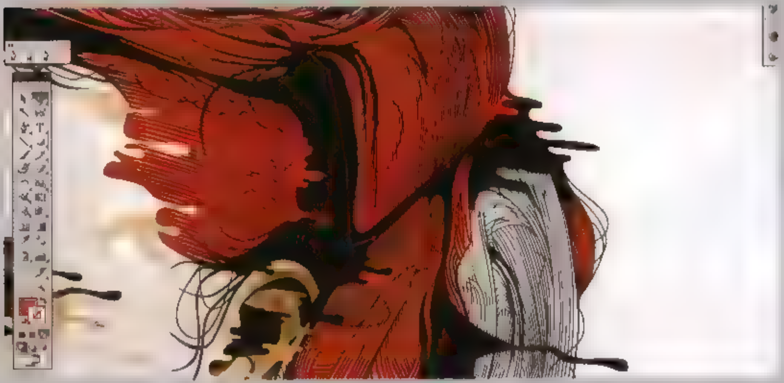
09___Once all the drips are in place, it's a good idea to start connecting some of the shading together in the same direction as the drips, making it look more like a flowing liquid. This also clears up some of the large areas of space. Start to think about finalising the face, making sure the drips are evenly spread and there are no large areas of blank space to attract attention.



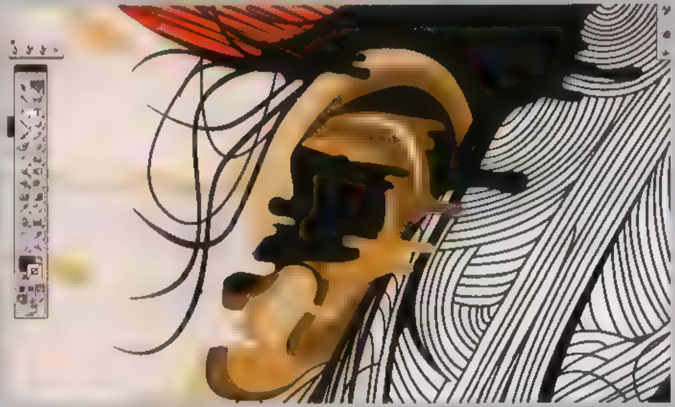
10_____ Now start thinking about the hair. Make an outline using the same stroke weight you began with on the face. It's a good idea to begin with a single outline and then work in some further areas of detail, creating sections within that space. Try to stay consistent with your use of filled and blank areas.



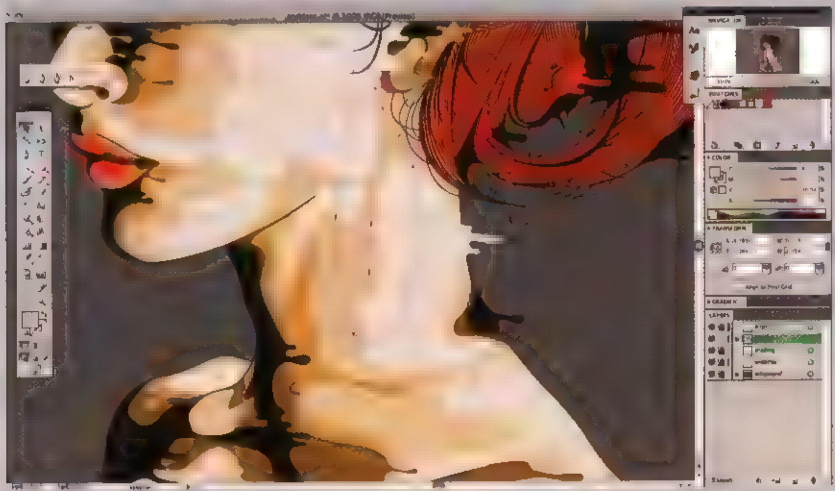
11_____ Once the hair structure is in place, it's time to fill it with lots of detail. Using the Pen tool – this should be set to No Fill and a light stroke – begin to add two-point lines, flowing in the direction you feel the hair going. Try to mix it up a bit by switching direction every so often or intertwining lines. This is a time-consuming process, but the result makes it worthwhile.



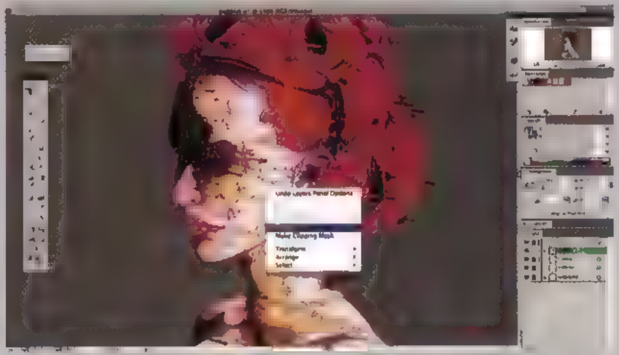
12_____ Now the hair needs to be coloured. With the same layering technique you used to colour the face, start to add blocks of the brighter hue into each large section of hair. Once this is complete, turn each block into a colour gradient using two variations of the shade. This isn't vital, but the two tones coming through the mesh of hair add a nice feel to the overall image.



13_____ It's a good idea to work your way around the outline of the hair, adding extra detail as you go. Create individual strands of hair using the Pen tool and curve them around the structure. Use a mixture of solid fills and fine strokes.

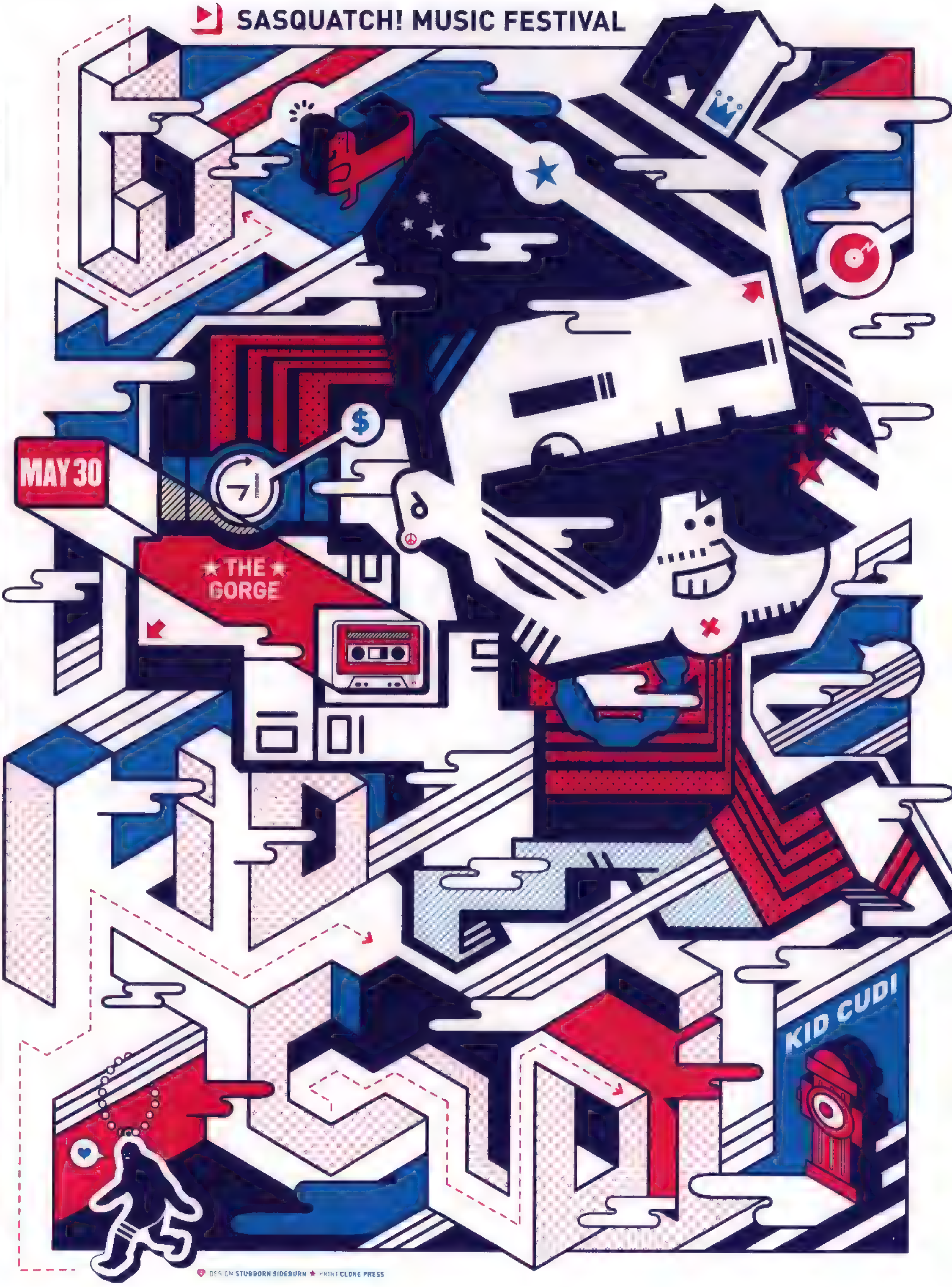


14_____ The portrait is almost complete, so sit back and have a critical look. If there are any areas that don't match the overall style, amend them. Try to look for areas with less detail or lots of blank space that might stick out, then begin to think about a solid fill backdrop that will complement your image.



15_____ Once you're happy with your image, I would recommend unlocking all the layers and selecting the entire picture. From here, expand it as you did at the start and group it. When this is done you can take it into Photoshop as a smart object to finalise your composition.

SASQUATCH! MUSIC FESTIVAL


MAY 30
★ THE ★
GORGE
KID CUDI

DESIGN **STUBBORN SIDEBURN** ★ PRINT **CLONE PRESS**

Illustrator CS5 or later

Integrate characters into your work

Junichi Tsuneoka walks through how to incorporate your character designs with custom type to create a two-colour poster

Characters can be very strong communication tools when successfully used as part of a design application. In this tutorial, I'll explain how to create a unique character and build up its background, incorporating custom type to make a stunning, visually consistent composition.

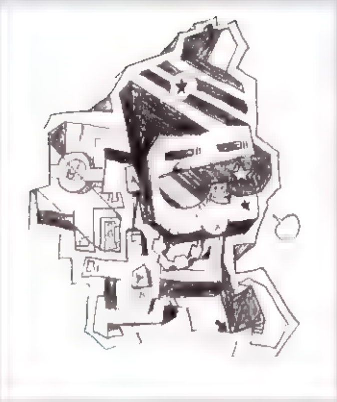
Using a character design that I created as part of a two-colour screenprinted poster for Washington's Sasquatch Music Festival, we'll cover the process from initial sketches through to producing the final vector design, using the Pathfinder palette to noticeably speed up your workflow.

Junichi Tsuneoka
__Japan-born, USA-based Junichi is the founder of the Stubborn Sideburn studio, and specialises in illustrative design using characters. His clients include Adidas, Microsoft, Publicis and more. www.stubborn sideburn.com

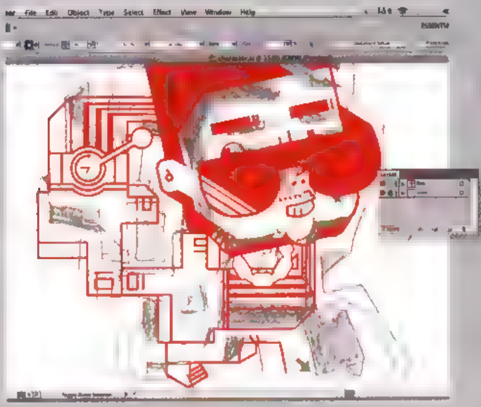
Time needed
3-5 hours

Skills
- Use the Pen and Pathfinder tools
- Create custom vector lettering
- Design balanced compositions

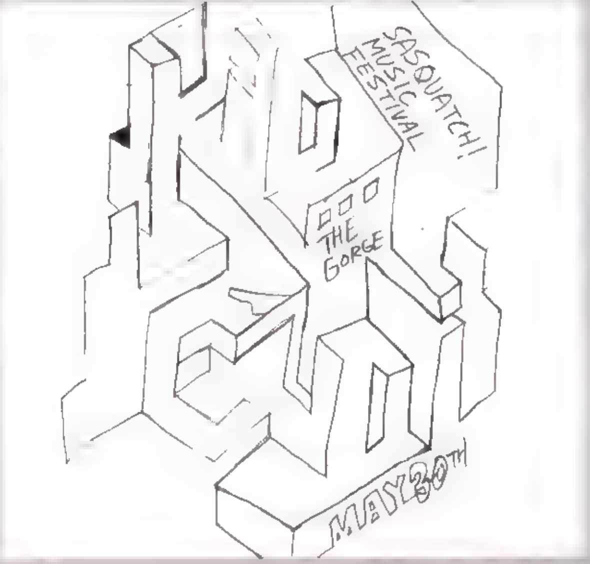
Assets
You'll find the full size screengrabs for each step of this project at www.computerarts.co.uk/illustratoressentials



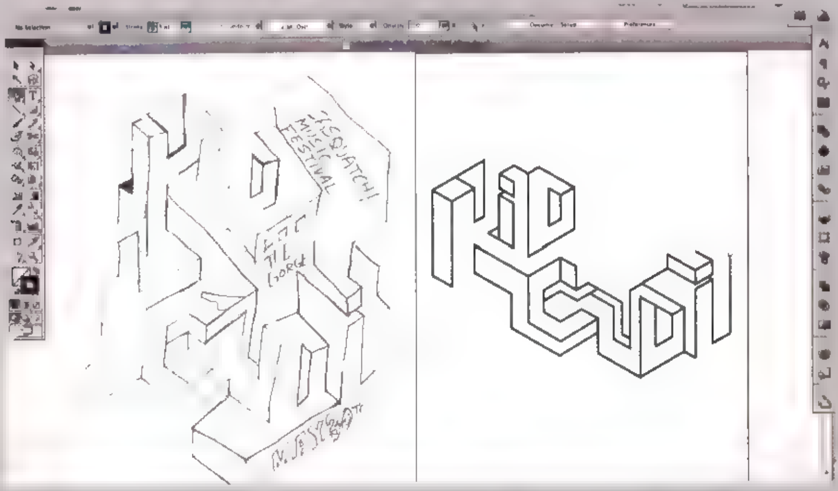
01__ First brainstorm your character. I designed this one to feature on a poster for rapper Kid Cudi, so I used the artist as my inspiration and came up with a B-Boy type of character. Make a rough sketch. Don't worry too much about quality because we'll clean it up with the Pen tool later.



02__ Next, scan in your image and open a new document in Illustrator. From the File menu, place the scanned image into the document and lower the opacity a little. Then create a new layer on top of the image and start tracing the lines with the Pen tool. I usually use a red colour at this stage for better visibility, and edit and develop the sketch as I trace the lines.

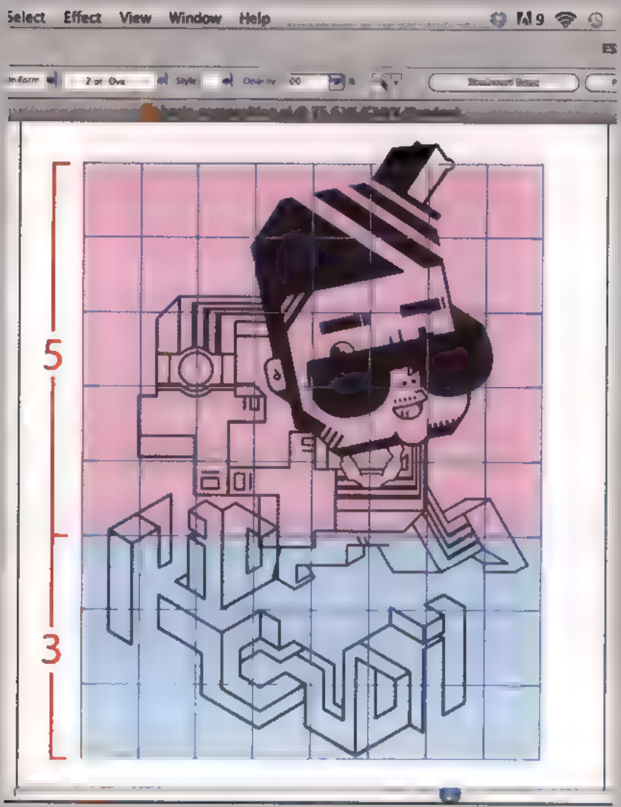


03__ Now for the type element. I decided that the main type would integrate more successfully with the character if I treated it as part of the illustration, rather than using an existing font. Working on paper again, look at the style of your character and transfer the aesthetic to the type. In this case, the solution was to distort the perspective to create the look of an optical illusion.

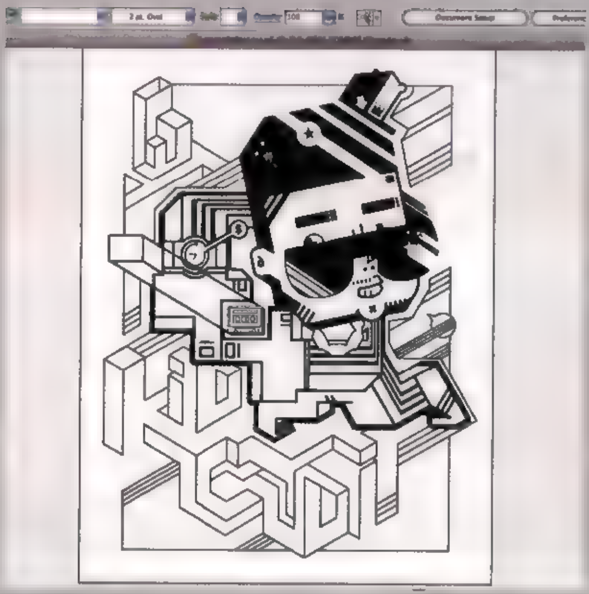


04__ Scan in your handmade type, and create a vector version. As before, these don't have to be identical – now is a good opportunity to fine-tune your design. Notice that my digital type has a different composition from the original sketch.

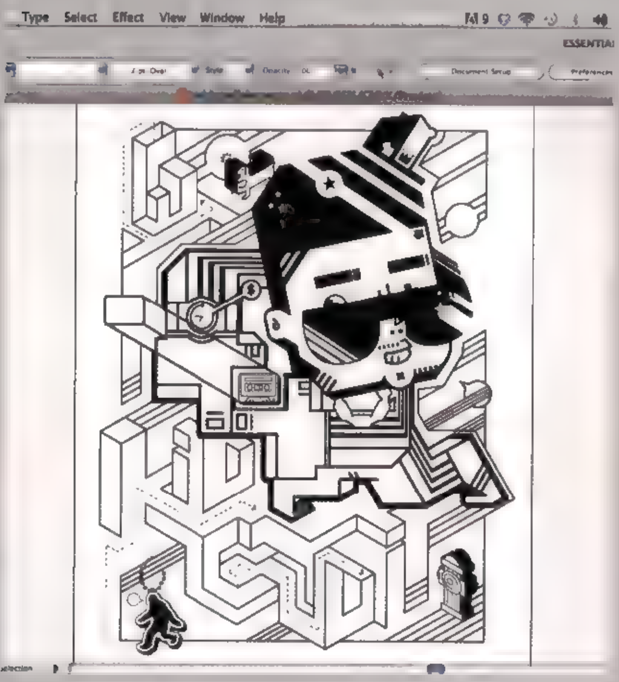
→


Select Effect View Window Help
5
3

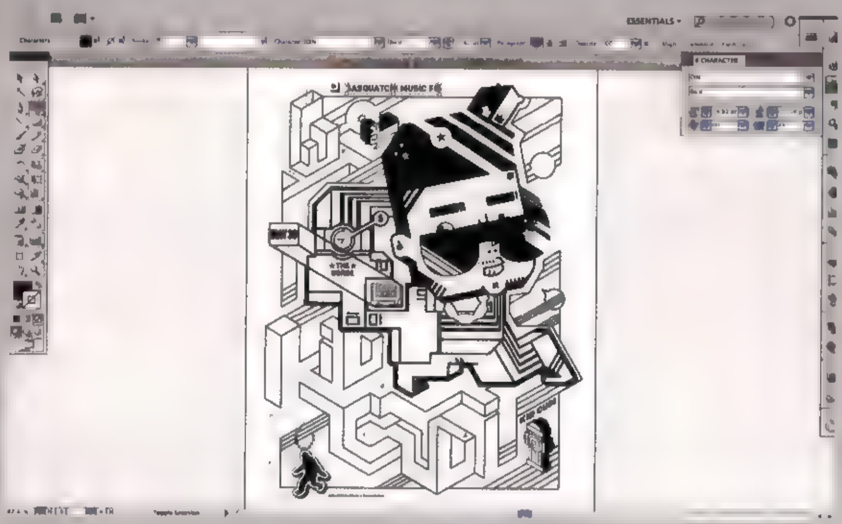
05___ Position both your character and type in a new document, changing the size of the two components for the best composition. I usually go for a 5:3 ratio, which is a comfortable size relationship. This process is very important: it's the basis of your final design, so make sure that you're happy before continuing.



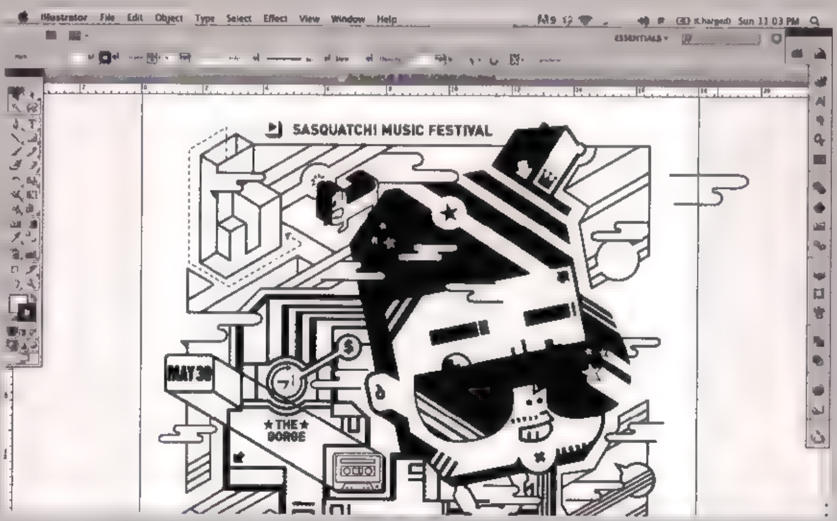
06___ Once you've figured out the basic composition, add some supporting graphics around the main images. I came up with some simple elements that have a similar style to the type, and added these all over the document to help connect the character and the type, and increase the overall consistency. I also adjusted the line width, based on the image hierarchy, making it thicker where I wanted to put emphasis.


Type Select Effect View Window Help

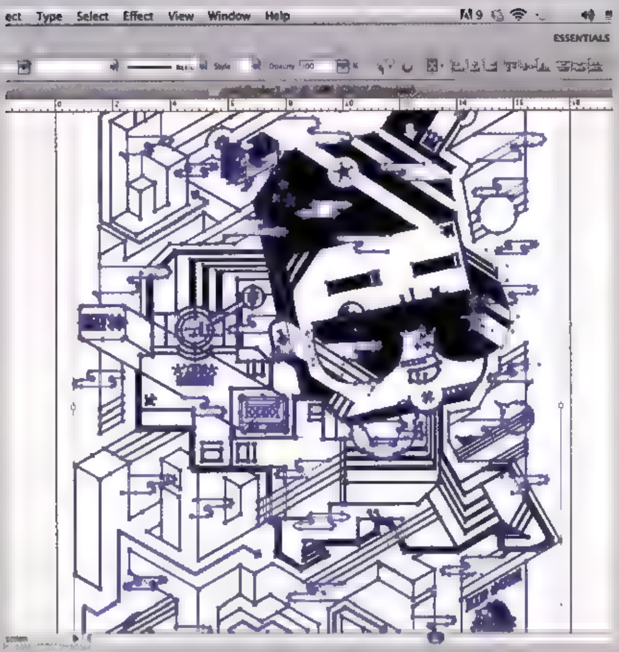
07___ Now add more details – I've included symbols, for example. A strong composition is often made up of distinctive large, medium and small elements: here, the character is the large element; type, medium; and everything else is small. By following this system, I've given the image a strong hierarchy, to which I can add a lot of details to inject depth into the design without losing the strength of the composition.


SASQUATCH! MUSIC FE
ESSENTIALS

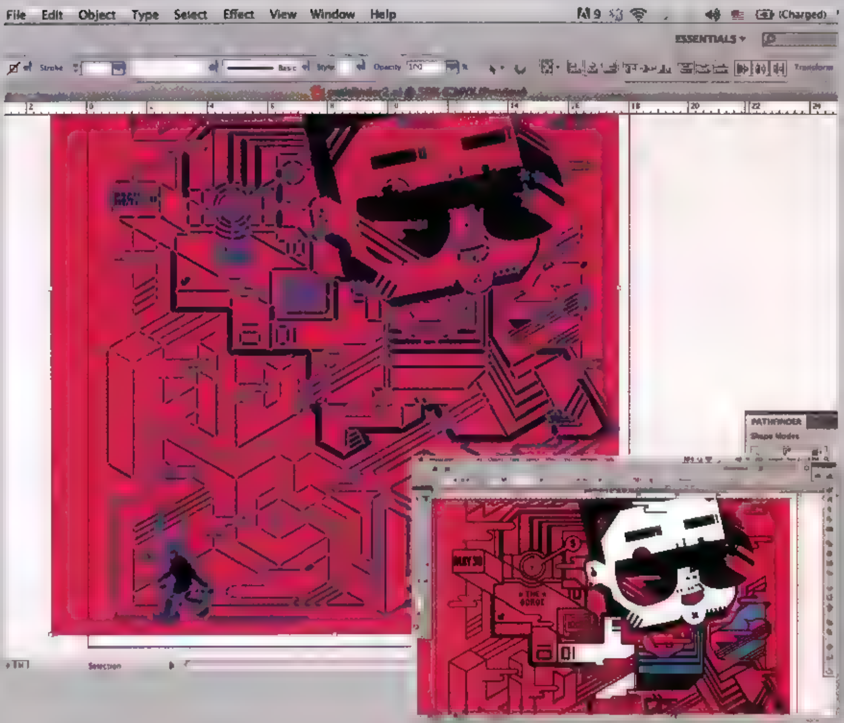
08___ Now to add any secondary type. As before, it's important to position these within the composition where they won't interfere with other elements. However, make sure you don't lose the readability of the text.


Illustrator File Edit Object Type Select Effect View Window Help
ESSENTIALS
SASQUATCH! MUSIC FESTIVAL
MAY 30
★ THE ★ GORGE

09___ To help blend the character further with the rest of the image and add depth, I created one more layer of smaller elements – the clouds. I carefully positioned them to create a nice interaction between the foreground and background.


ect Type Select Effect View Window Help
ESSENTIALS

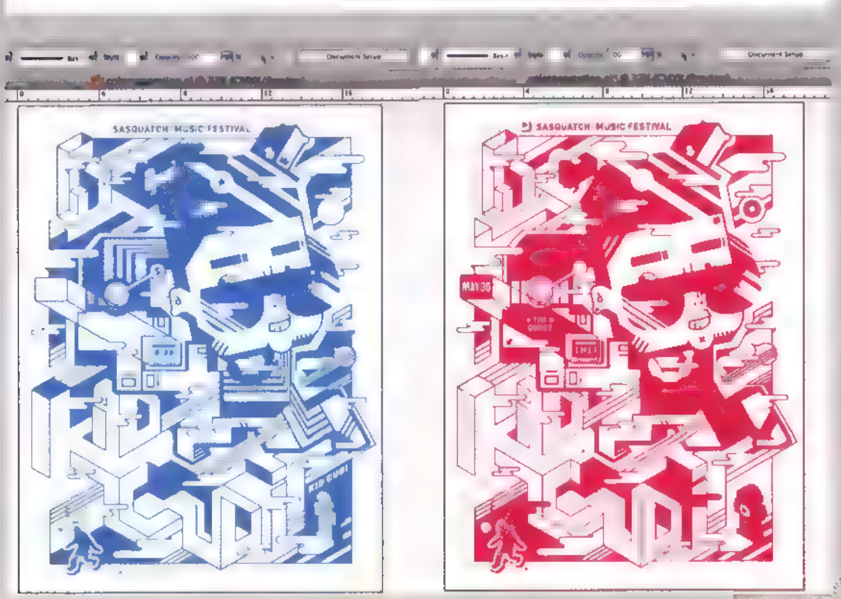
10____ When you've laid out all the parts and finalised the composition, convert the strokes into an outline stroke (Object>Path>Outline stroke) and create an outline for the type (Type>Create outline). Then select all and go to Effect> Pathfinder>Divide. Click anywhere on the black area, and go to Select>Same>Fill color. Lock the selection and delete everything else. Now unlock the selection, and navigate to Pathfinder>Unite. This will make the file as simple as possible, and it will also look clean.


File Edit Object Type Select Effect View Window Help
(Charged)
ESSENTIALS
PATHFINDER
Shape Modes
Selection

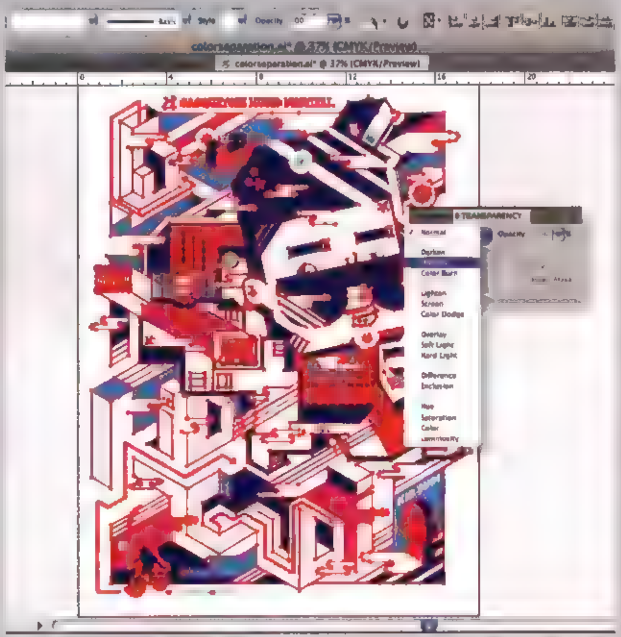
11____ We're ready to add colour. I created a magenta rectangle big enough to cover the whole graphic, and went to Object>Arrange>Send to Back. Select all, and go to Pathfinder>Divide. Ungroup the objects. Now you can individually select any section to change the fill colour. It's possible to achieve the same result by using Object>Live paint, but since we're working on a two-colour design with over-print for the third colour, this is a much faster process.

Saving time

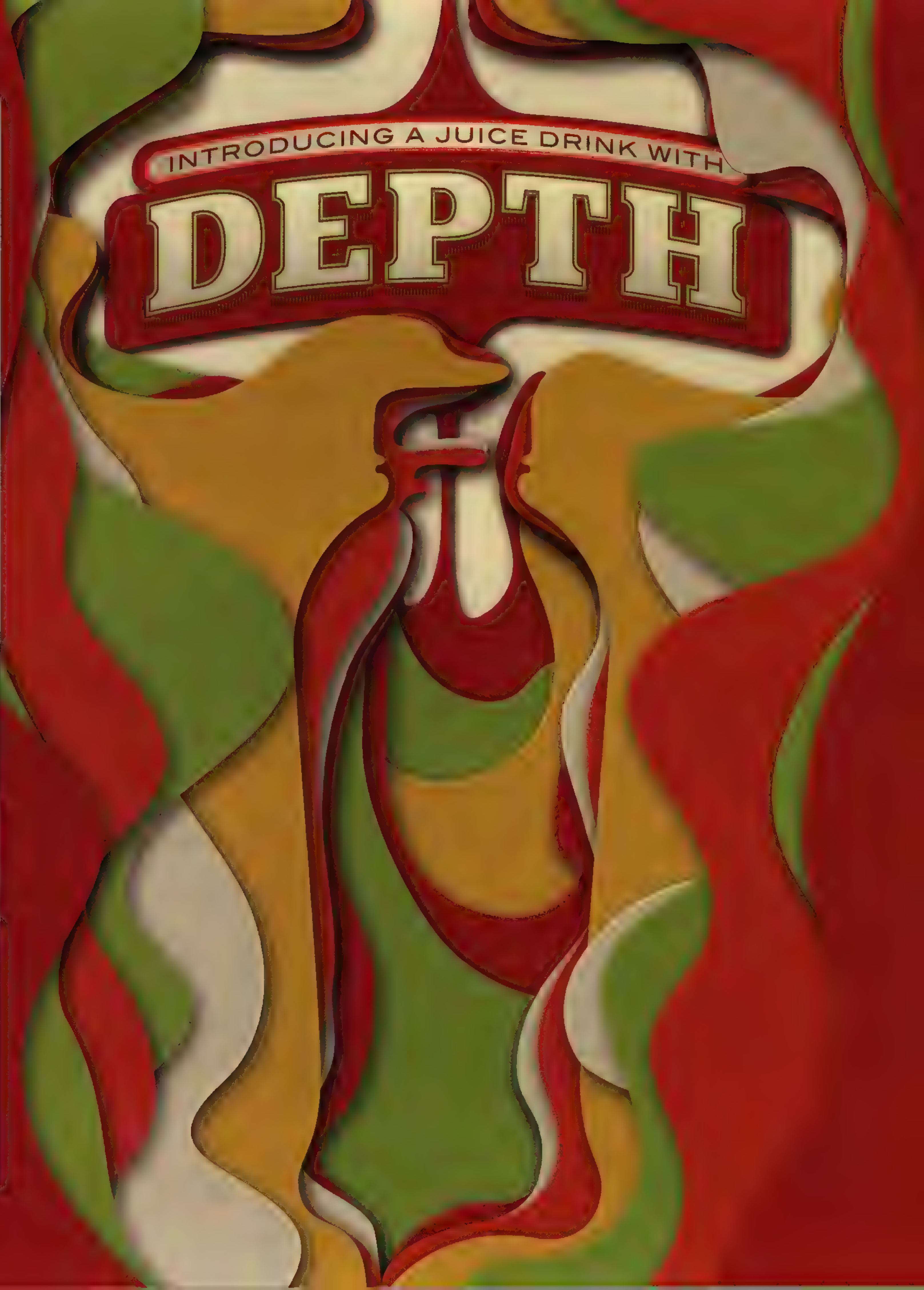
Illustrator's Pathfinder palette is an effective tool for creating and manipulating shapes, and an excellent time-saver to integrate into your workflow


SASQUATCH MUSIC FESTIVAL
SASQUATCH MUSIC FESTIVAL
Document Setup

12____ Once you've decided on your two colours, make two layers and copy all the parts in your first colour (cyan, here) onto one layer, and all of your second colour (magenta, here) onto the other layer. Next, copy the original black parts to the two layers. This will be the over-print area to create the third colour. To move a selection from one layer to the other, select all of that colour using Select>Same>Fill color. You'll see a small square on your Layers panel, which you can grab to move the selection into another layer.


colorseparation.ai* @ 37% (CMYK/Preview)
TRANSPARENCY
Normal
Opacity
Darken
Multiply
Color Burn
Lighten
Screen
Color Dodge
Overlay
Soft Light
Hard Light
Difference
Exclusion
Hue
Saturation
Color
Luminosity

13____ Select your top-colour layer (magenta). Open the Transparency window and select Multiply as your blending mode. This will make the magenta become translucent without losing its opacity – showing the over-print area as dark purple – so that you can simulate how the two inks will print on top of each other. In this way, you can then set up the file for screenprinting and simulate the finalised image digitally at the same time.


INTRODUCING A JUICE DRINK WITH
DEPTH

Illustrator CS3 or later

Papercut aesthetics with vectors

Steven Bonner shows you how to digitally replicate a 3D papercut style

I've always been drawn towards craft-led techniques, and like to find ways to recreate them in a digital environment. I often add some traditional airbrushing into my shading work with Photoshop and a Wacom tablet, for instance.

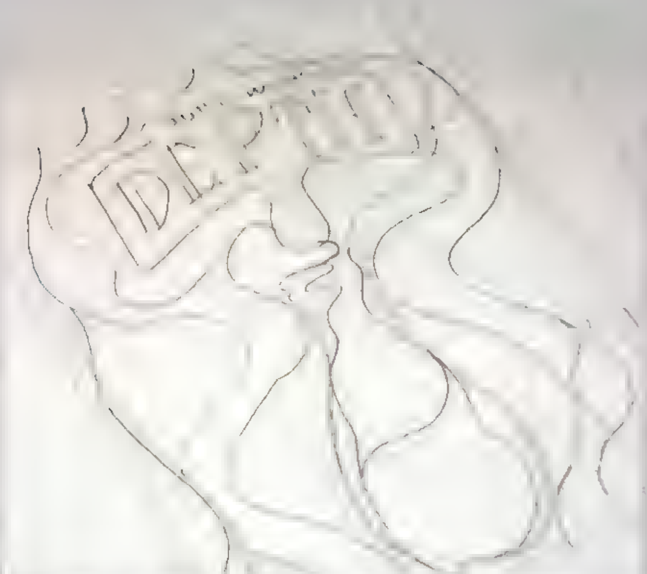
I was recently asked to produce my own take on Diesel's Only The Brave Eau de Toilette bottle, and decided to emulate a papercut aesthetic to create a fluid and abstract design that would be distinctive and have a sense of depth. Using a juice bottle as a subject, I'll show you how to digitally produce a papercut look and integrate it with the style of type that you might find on advertising posters or print adverts, for example.

Steven Bonner
— Based in Stirling, Scotland, Steven is a multi-disciplined designer and illustrator who has worked for clients including Harper Collins, Cadbury and Diesel. www.stevenbonner.com

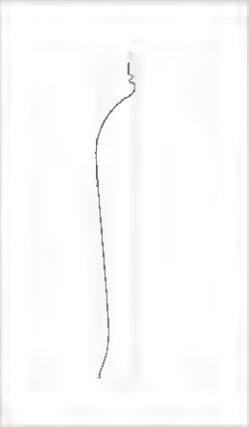
Time needed
3-4 hours

Assets
You'll find the full size screengrabs for each step of this project at www.computerarts.co.uk/illustratoressentials

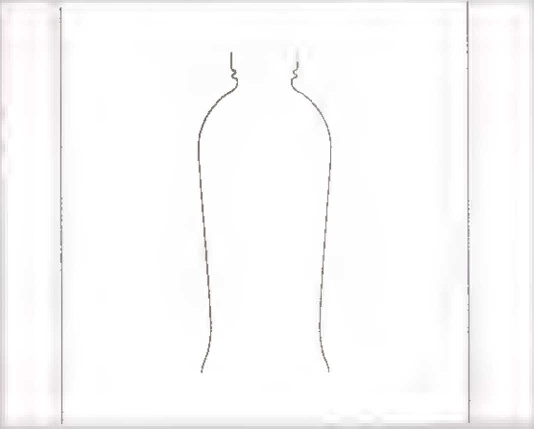
Skills
- Understand how to layer an image
- Use basic layer effects
- Increase relevance with colour



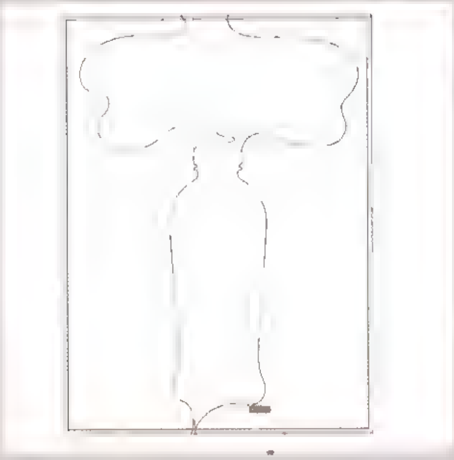
01—Start by sketching a few rough layouts with a pencil. Pay close attention to how the layers interact, as this is where you'll build up the shape of the object you're illustrating. Even if you think you've hit on the perfect image early in the process, keep sketching as you might find that new ideas come to you as you go.



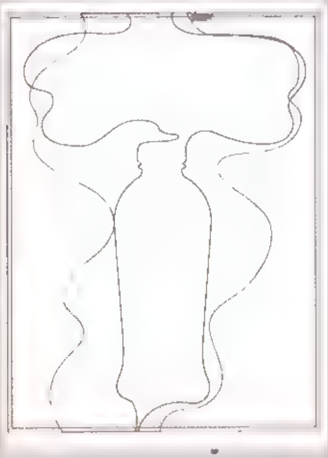
02—When you're happy with your design, open Illustrator and create a new document. Select the Pen tool (P) and begin drawing one side of your bottle image.



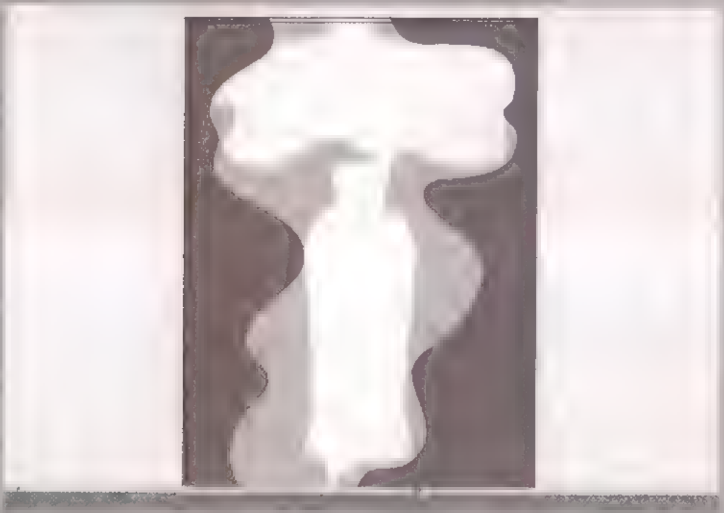
03—Once complete, copy the shape (Ctrl/Cmd+C) and paste it in front (Ctrl/Cmd+F). Next, select the Reflect tool (O), hold down Shift to constrain the proportions and flip the shape horizontally. This will give you the other side of your bottle. Position it an appropriate distance away from the original, experimenting until you're happy with the width of the silhouette.



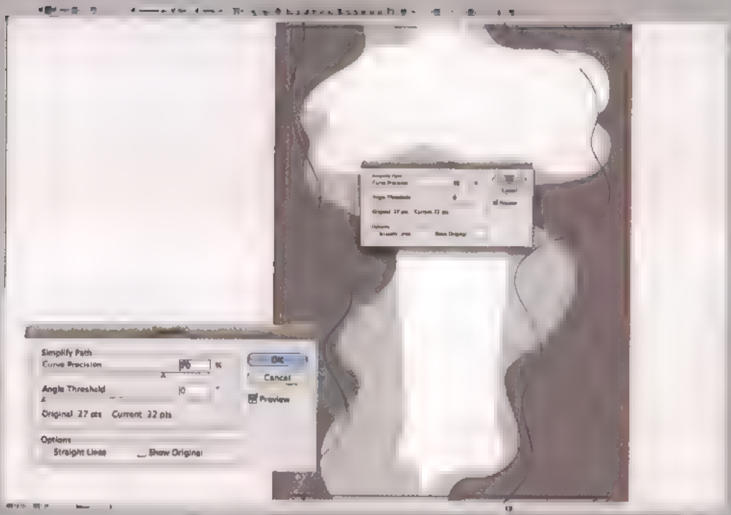
04—Using the Pen tool again, extend the lines off the page and connect them to form two solid shapes. Take care to keep the lines smooth, and allow space for your headline elements.



05—Continue drawing more shapes in the same way, following the layer interaction sketch that you developed in Step 1. →

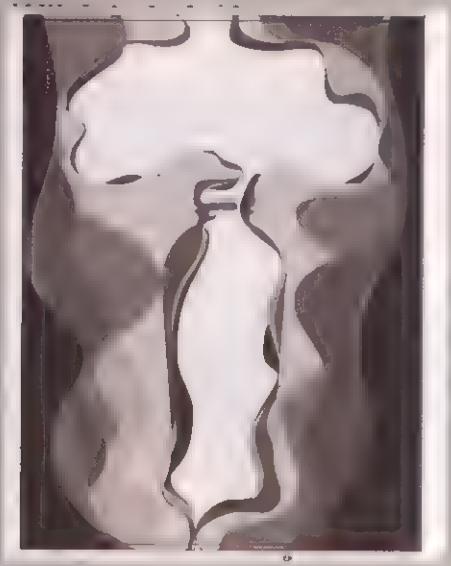


06____ Once you've drawn a few layers, it might be easier to block-colour them to give a better idea of how they work together. Again, make sure each element is joined as a solid shape to frame the page – this will make the elements easier to reposition when transferring the layers to Photoshop later. Use shades of grey for now because we'll add colour later.

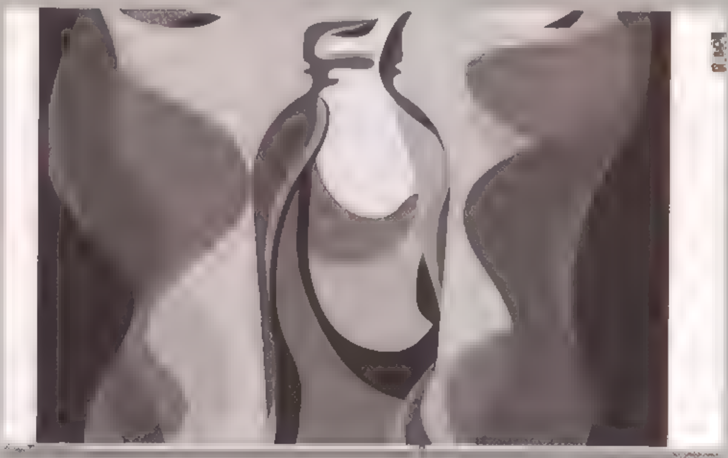


Simplify Path
Curve Precision 96 %
Angle Threshold 10 °
Original: 27 pts Current: 22 pts
Options
Straight Lines
Show Original

07____ A great tip when creating your lines is to use the Simplify option to make sure they keep a smoothness to them, and have nice, natural curves – especially if you're drawing with a graphics tablet. To do this, select your lines and go to Object>Path>Simplify. In the dialog box you can set the levels to your own preference to achieve the look you prefer.



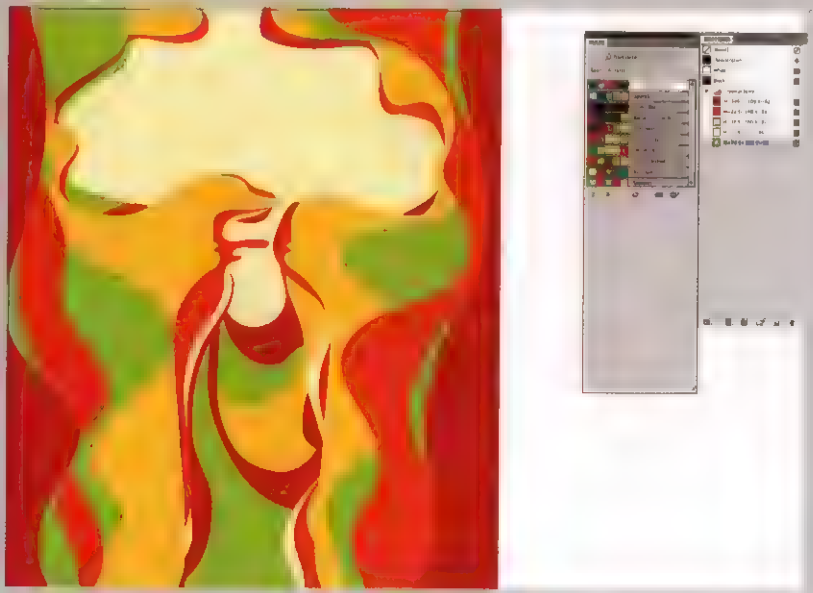
08____ Continue building up your layers, taking care to achieve a sense of randomness in the overall image. Although you want to show a definite shape, you don't want it to look unnatural. Using the Direct Selection tool (A), adjust individual points to create differences in adjacent layers. To help add more depth later when we add shadows in Photoshop, try copying a layer behind itself and making very small changes to points.



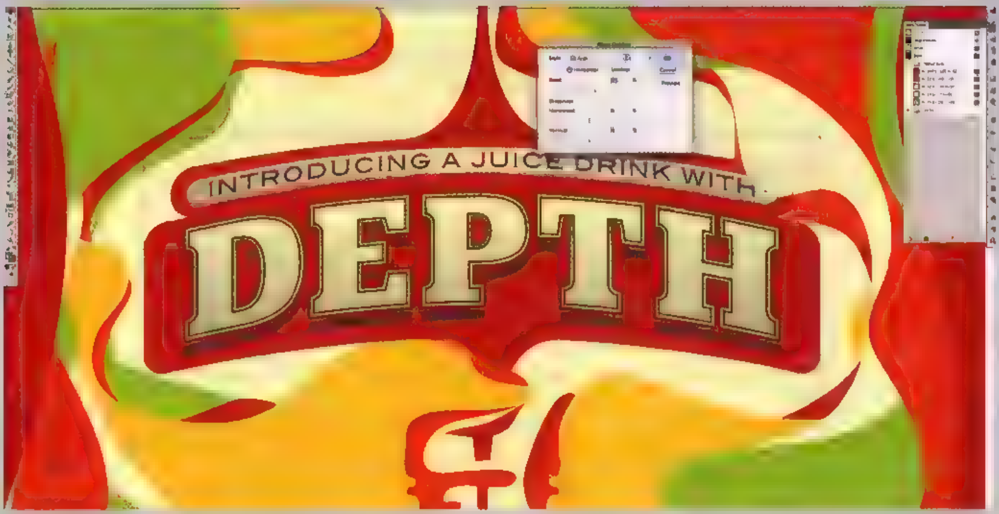
09____ Once you've blocked in the main silhouette, zoom in and create a series of waves inside the bottle, in the semi-circular style shown here. This will make it appear as though liquid is sloshing around inside the bottle.

BEND THE RULES

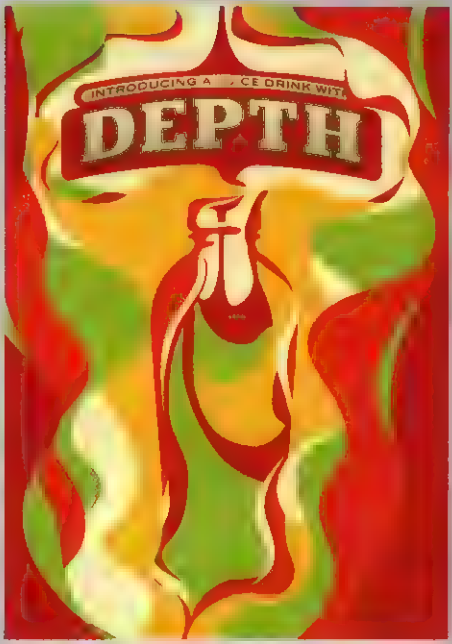
Play with how different layers interchange by masking them against each other where they intersect. This can create some interesting details that would be very difficult to achieve by hand.



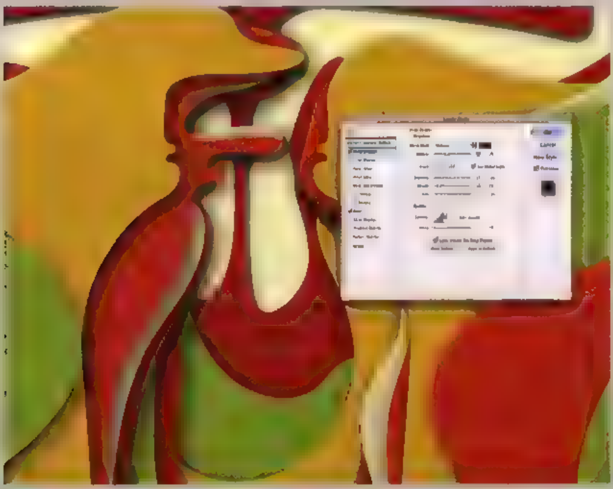
10____ When you're happy with the main composition, begin adding in your colours. I often use Adobe's Kuler engine to help me choose a colour palette – it enables you to try out a variety of schemes in minutes, based on keywords that you input. As this image is for a fictitious fruit juice brand, I've chosen colours that suggest different flavoured juices. This keeps the image brand-led, rather than focusing on an individual product or flavour.



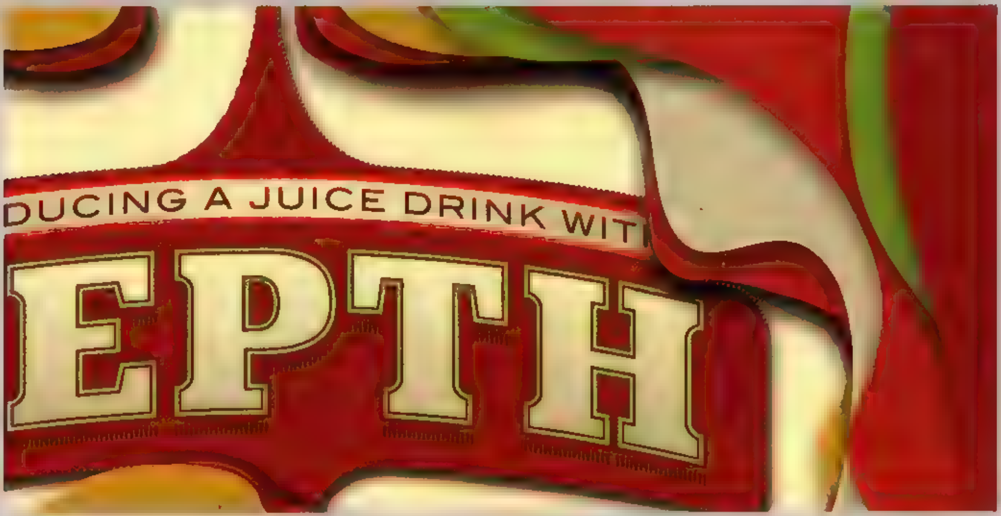
11_____Next, draw your title. It doesn't have to be very complicated as the image itself is quite full-on and you don't want the typography to become lost, but it's a headline so it needs to stand out. To frame the type, I've added a curved banner behind it (Effect>Warp>Arch, with Bend set to 15%), and drawn curved lines top and bottom to illustrate the liquid pouring into the banner and dripping from underneath into the bottle. This helps link both elements more effectively than if the type had been placed with no environmental link, and results in the overall piece feeling more connected.


INTRODUCING A JUICE DRINK WITH
DEPTH

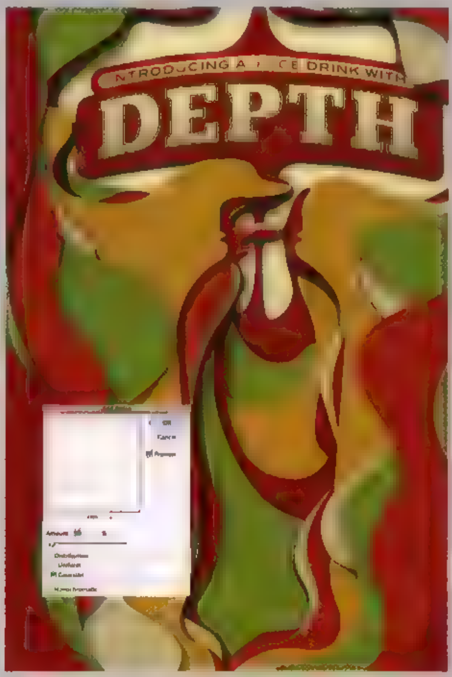
12_____With the base image now drawn in Illustrator, it's time to add the finishing touches in Photoshop. Of course, the same aesthetic could be achieved with Illustrator's Effects menu, but I prefer the quicker rendering and control in Photoshop. Copy and paste each layer into Photoshop in a new document.



13_____Select a layer and then double-click the Layer Style icon in the Layers palette. Check the Drop Shadow box and set it to Multiply, reducing the Opacity to around 35-40%. Play around here with the various settings to get a look that suits you best. Now check the Satin box and set it to Multiply, reducing the Opacity to around 12% – this will give the look of a slightly raised piece of paper or board. Go to Layer>Layer Style>Copy Layer Style, select all the layers except the logo and go to Layer>Layer Style>Paste Layer Style. This will apply the same style to all the other layers. You might find you need to go into some layers individually to fine-tune them.


DUCING A JUICE DRINK WIT
EPTH

14_____To give the headline a little bit more interest, create a layer mask and paint out some areas of the layers above. This will help it integrate with the design more effectively. You'll find you have more precision if you first create a mask then click on the layer you want to paint out and select it with the Magic Wand tool (W) before returning to the mask and painting the area with a soft brush (B).

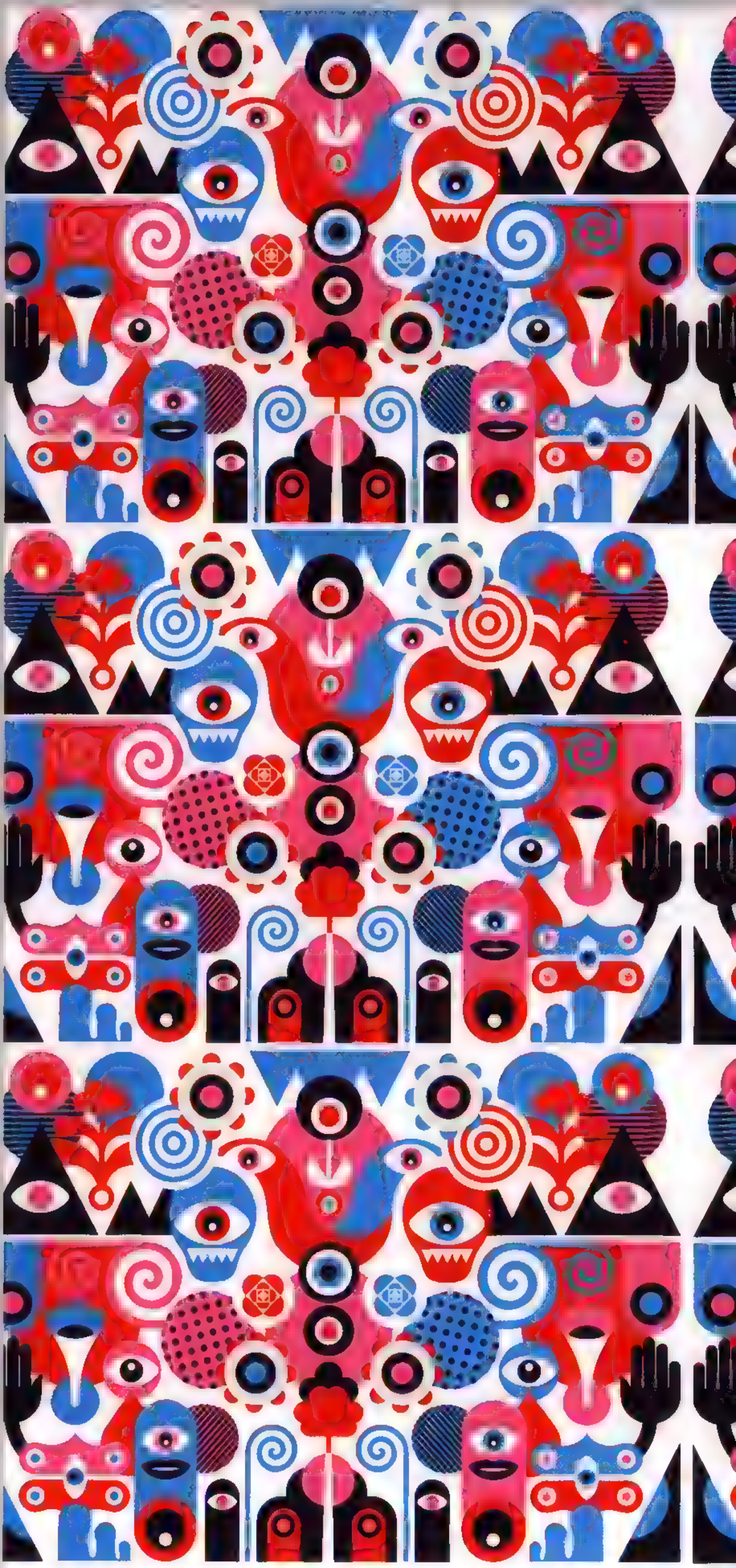


15_____Lastly, add a little texture to the piece by creating a new layer and filling it with white, then setting it to Multiply. From there, add some noise (Filter>Noise>Add Noise) to give the overall image a slightly mottled grain texture, reminiscent of mounting board. And that's it: you're done.

Illustrator CS3 or later

Create a multi-use pattern

Fernando Volken Togni shares his pro technique for designing a four-colour repeat pattern that can be translated across multiple applications



You can use patterns for wallpaper, book covers, fabric, purses, cars – almost any surface that you can imagine. But how do you create a design that not only fits together seamlessly, but is aesthetically pleasing as well?

In this tutorial we'll create a repeat pattern that can cover any kind of surface. The pattern in this example will focus on natural characters and creatures, so we'll draw those elements first and then create a composition with them. Using geometric shapes and a reduced colour palette, it's possible to get great results with a modern, cool look.

Fernando Volken-Togni

— This designer and illustrator graduated in advertising, and now lives and works in Porto Alegre, Brazil. His illustrations have been commissioned by the likes of Quatar Airways, 85Four London and more. www.cargocollective.com/nandovt

Assets

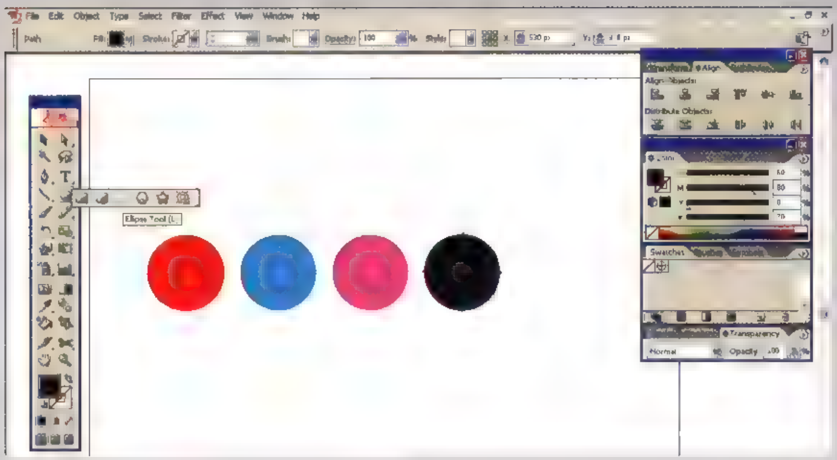
You'll find the full size screengrabs for each step of this project at www.computerarts.co.uk/illustratoressentials

Time needed

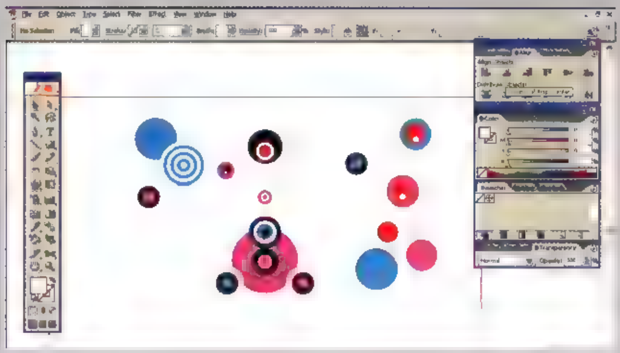
4-5 hours

Skills

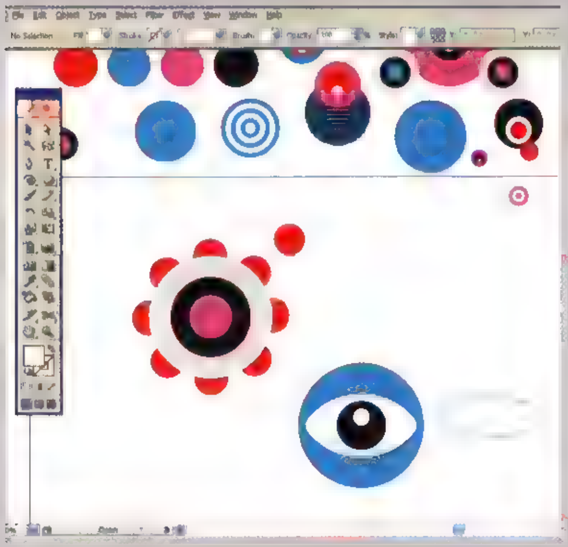
- Create an interplay of vector elements
- Use minimalist shapes
- Construct symmetrical compositions



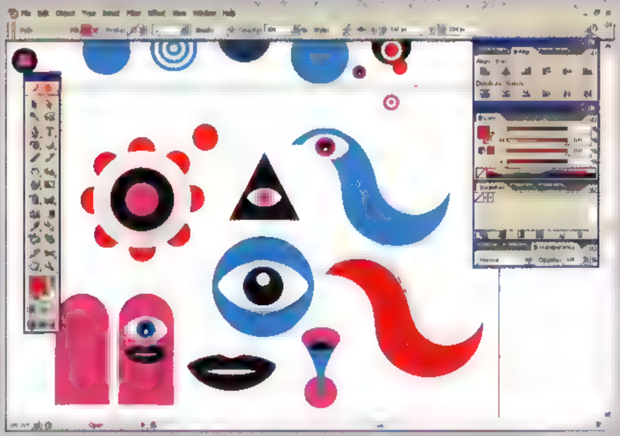
01_____First, set up the canvas as an A4 portrait, choose a reduced colour palette and draw four circles. Ideally you want at least two vibrant colours, one less vibrant and a darker one – I went for red, cyan, pink and dark purple. Hold Shift while using the Ellipse tool (L) to make perfect circles.



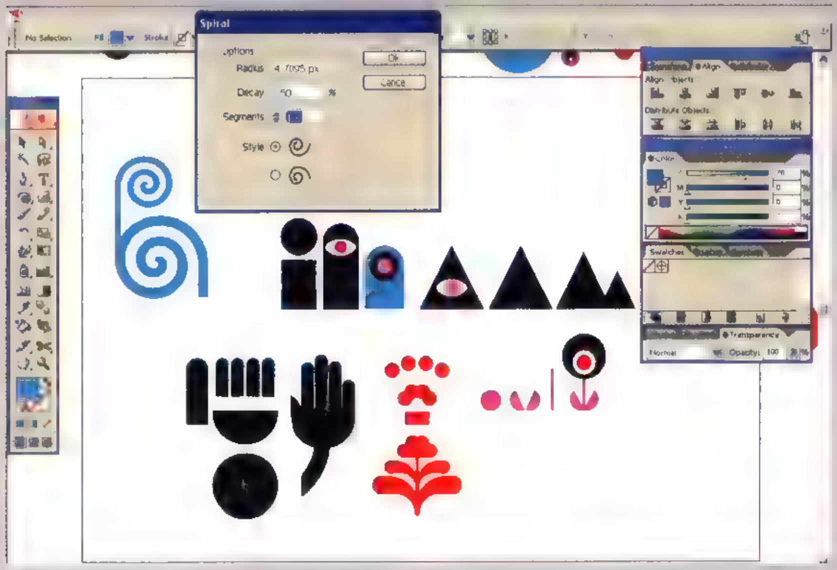
02_____Duplicate your circles to create new shapes, such as concentric circles and cartoon-style eyes. Choose randomly from your colour palette for these. Press Alt/Opt and drag the shapes to duplicate them. For concentric circles, select the circles you want to align, then go to Window>Align, and from the Align Objects options choose 'Horizontal Align Center' and 'Vertical Align Center'. You can place one circle inside another, but make sure they aren't all central so you have some variation.



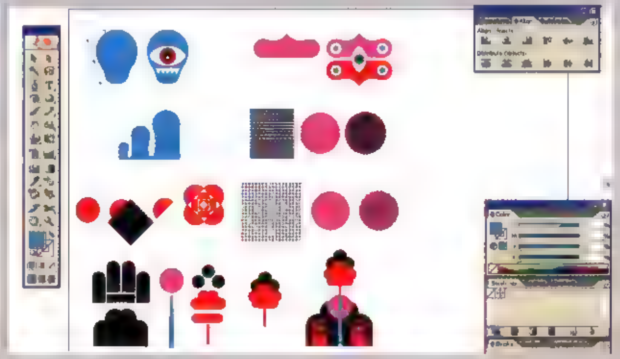
03_____Pull these elements out of the canvas to use later, and start creating some new, more complex elements, such as flowers. Take three concentric circles and create eight small circles to surround them. Move them to the back by pressing Ctrl/Cmd+Shift+[. To create an eye, make a blue circle and draw an oval with the Ellipse tool, making the shape slightly flat. Put a purple circle in the centre for the iris and a smaller white one inside to suggest reflected light.



04_____Now let's create a bird motif. With the Pen tool, make the shape of an 'S' and join the last point back to the first. Fill the shape and place the eye you created in step 03 on top, resized if necessary. You can also create a bugle shape with the Pen tool, placing a circle on the top and an ellipse at the bottom. For the one-eyed creature, draw a rounded pink rectangle, place a pink circle on top and merge the two objects, going to Object>Expand Appearance to unify the object. I added another eye and drew a purple mouth with the Pen tool.

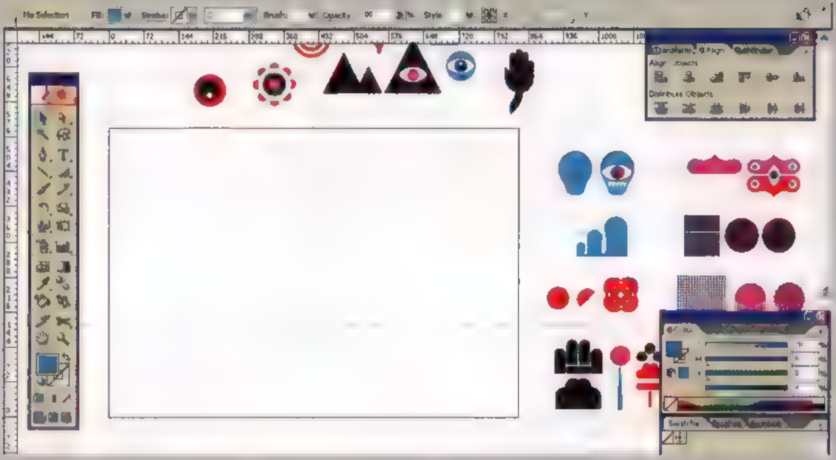


05_____A good composition requires multiple elements. Repeat existing ones and change their colour, or merge and cut shapes to create new ones. I've added cyan spirals, a purple creature, a hand, and various triangles and flower motifs here.

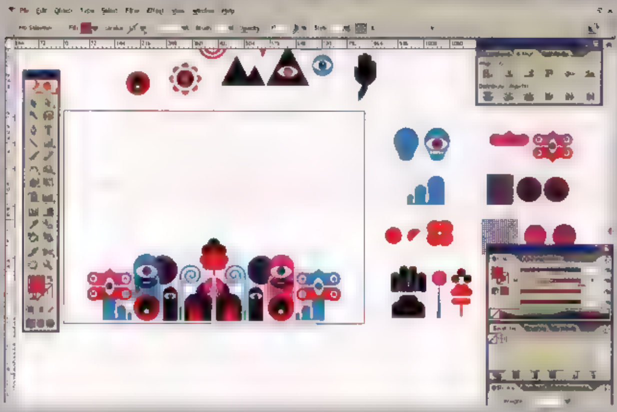


06_____Now let's create the skull. Select the Pen tool, draw a skull shape and fill it with cyan. Place an eye on top and a line of repeated white triangles for teeth. Continue to make as many elements as you see fit.

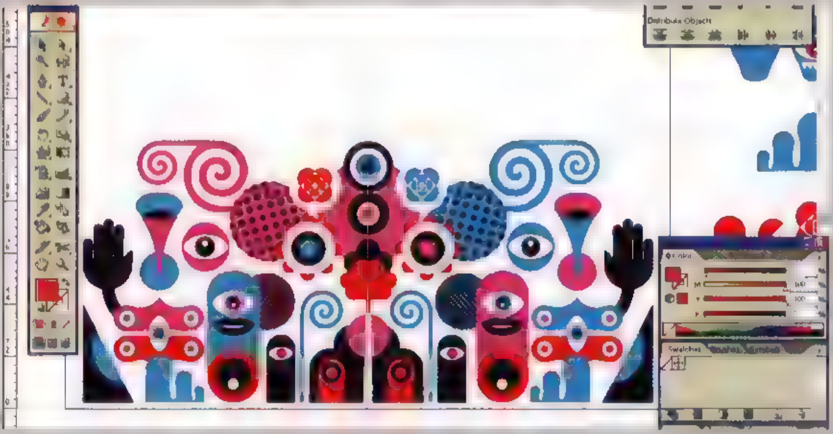
→



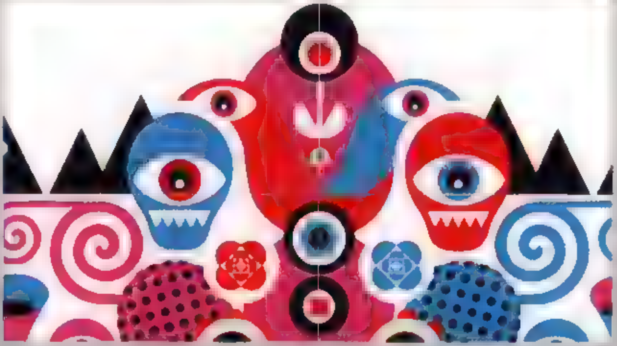
07___Clean up the canvas to begin the pattern structure. Surround the canvas with all the elements you've created, and hit Ctrl/Cmd+R to activate the page rulers. You'll need a six-piece grid on which to arrange the elements, so drag two horizontal blue guide lines down from the top ruler, and drag a vertical blue line from the ruler on the left to the centre of your canvas, splitting it down the middle.



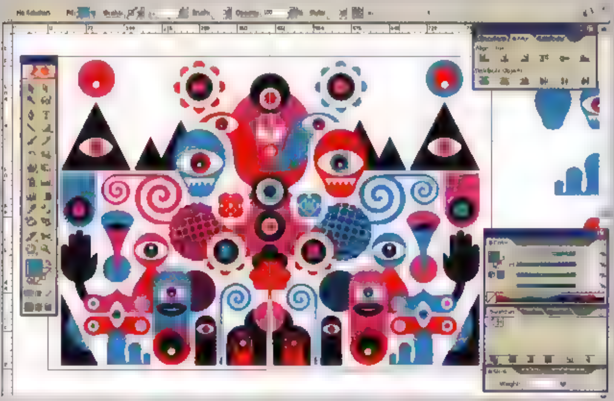
08___We're going to have a symmetrical pattern, so some shapes will be duplicated and have their colours changed during the process. Always start from the middle, and I find it's easier to begin at the base. I selected my tree and placed it centrally at the bottom, then placed other elements with a flat base alongside it. Duplicate all of your elements, so that the two sides of the central line mirror one another.



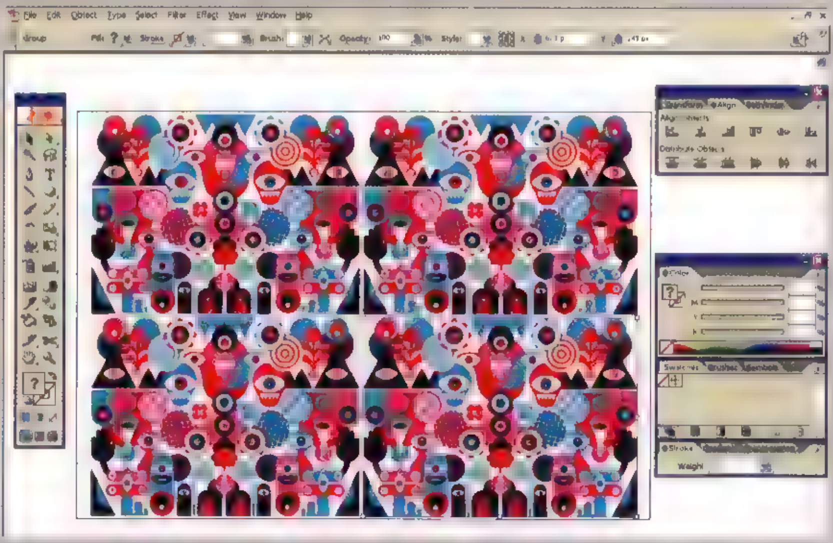
09___Continue working your way up the canvas, filling it with your elements and always maintaining symmetry. Circular shapes are good for filling blank spaces. Ensure you have shapes of different colours touching each other to create contrast, and introduce more elements if you need to. Flip them horizontally to keep everything symmetrical.



10___Overlap shapes at the centre if you like, as I've done with my birds. To send a shape backwards, hit Ctrl/Cmd+Shift+[.



11___I like to keep my illustrations balanced. To do this, you can work with guides or along an imaginary axis. Visualise vertical lines crossing some shapes, then align the elements by their vertical centre. For example, I've placed circles on the top of the pyramids, aligning each with the centre of the pyramid. Continue until you've filled all the blank spaces.



12___Once you're happy with your pattern rectangle, deselect the line guides (Ctrl/Cmd+;) then select all the elements with the Selection tool and group them (Ctrl/Cmd+G). Pressing Alt/Opt, drag the rectangle horizontally and vertically to multiply it as many times as you want. Your pattern is now ready.

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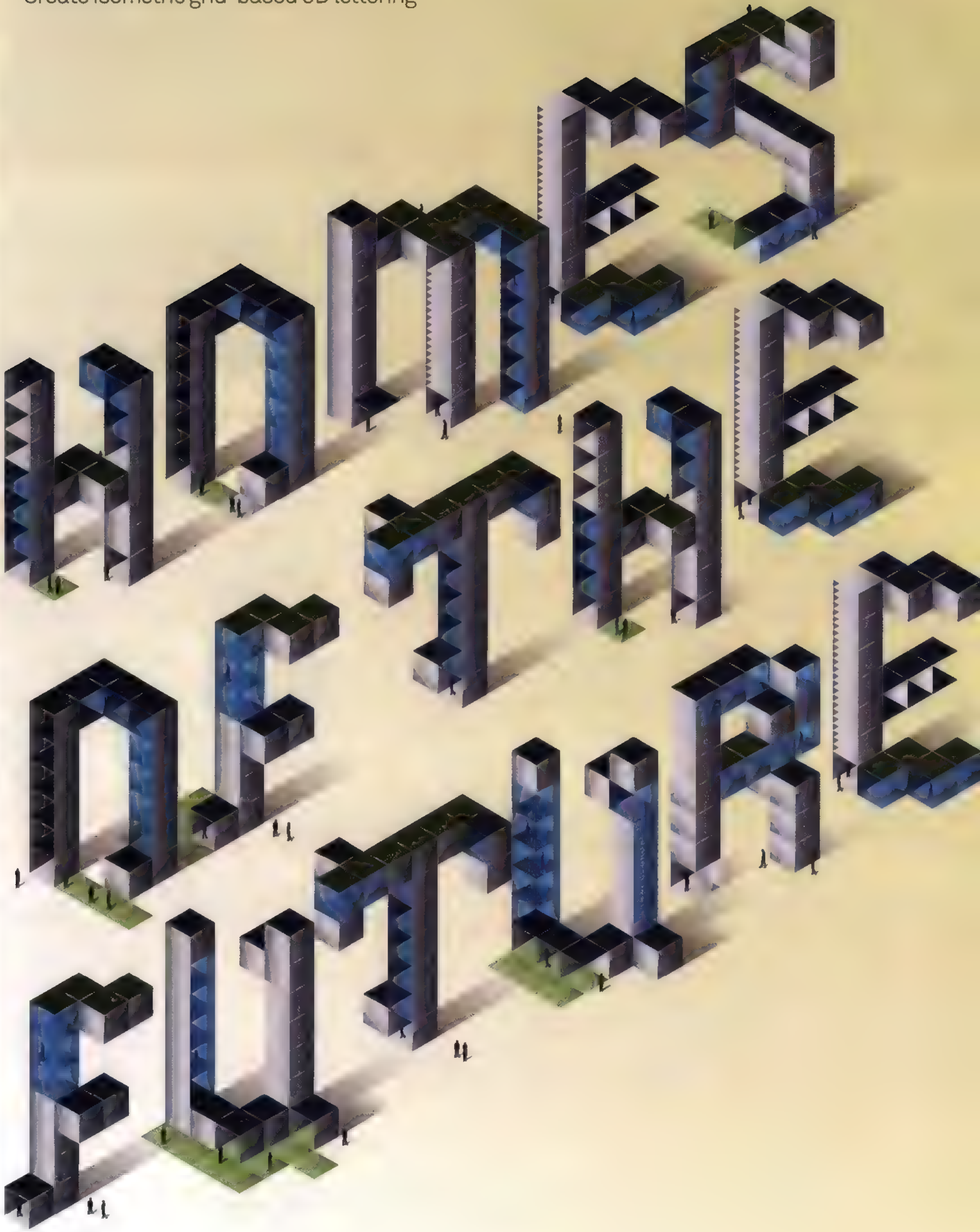

HOMES
OF THE
FUTURE

Illustrator CS3 or later

Create isometric grid-based 3D lettering

Steven Bonner shows you the possibilities of an isometric grid by creating a custom 3D typeface

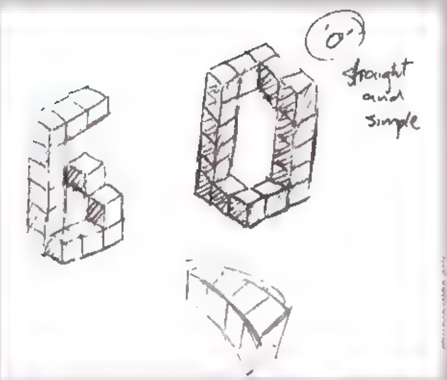
Isometric-based letters are the perfect way to reflect structure in a display typeface, as I discovered with a recent commission for a magazine feature on contemporary architecture. Taking the concept further, in this tutorial I'll guide you through the process of building a grid that will form the basis of your design, then show you how to draw, colour and light your letters to create a three-dimensional architectural scene. Once you understand the basics of this technique, you can use it to quickly and easily create standalone pieces or intricate repeating patterns.

Steven Bonner — Stirling-based Steven is a multi-disciplined designer and illustrator, working for clients such as Harper Collins, Cadbury and Diesel. His love of type is clear throughout his portfolio. www.stevenbonner.com

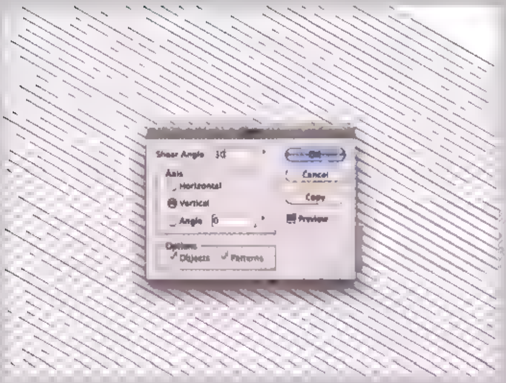
Time needed
2-3 hours

Skills
- Create an isometric grid
- Identify a light source to help create a 3D effect
- Use colour and transparency to show depth

Assets
You'll find the full size screengrabs for each step of this project at www.computerarts.co.uk/illustratoressentials



01___ Don't dive straight into Illustrator for this. Working on an isometric grid demands precision, but you'll get a better feel for what you want to achieve much faster by sketching a few ideas out onto paper with a pencil. When we reach the steps of making your own typeface on screen, I'll show the full process on one letter only, as it's much better to experiment and come up with your own type designs.



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Options
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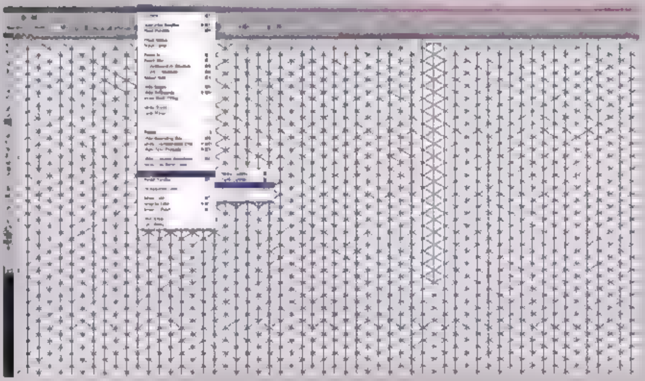
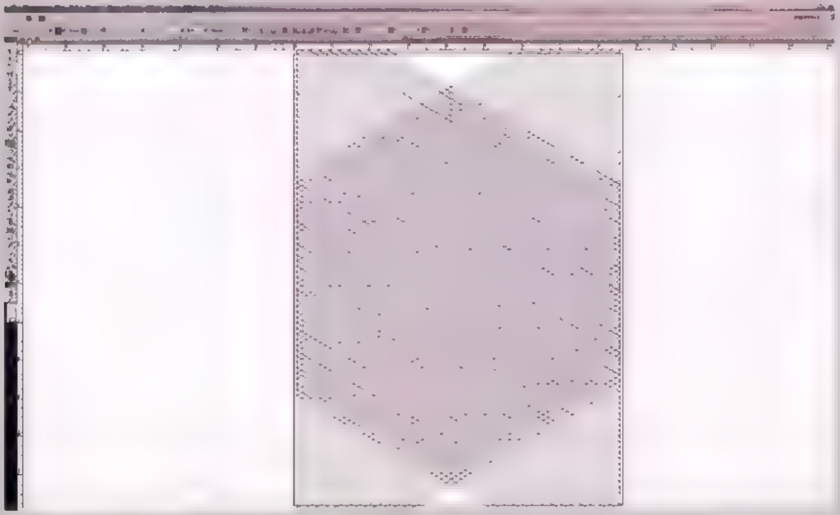
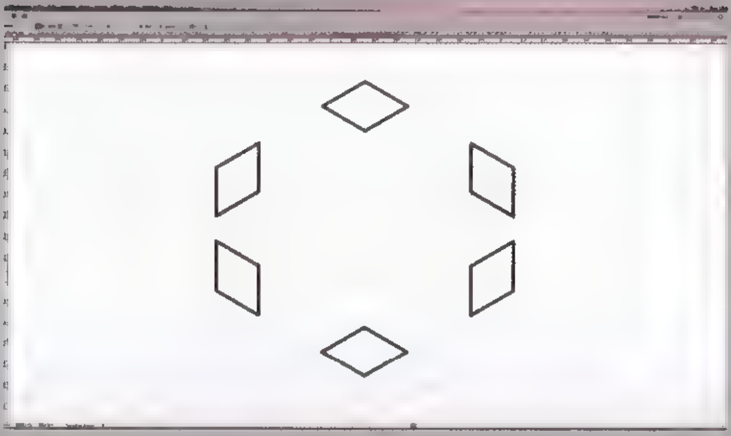
02___ There are lots of ways to make your isometric grid, all of which have their own benefits. But for me, this is the simplest method: firstly, using the Line tool in Illustrator, draw a horizontal line across your page and duplicate it several times until you have a good number of lines. Now select all and double-click on the Shear icon in the Toolbox panel. Enter an angle of 30 degrees and click on the vertical axis.



03___ Next, copy and paste a duplicate in front (Ctrl/Cmd+F) and select the Reflect tool. Hold Shift to constrain the result and then use your mouse to flip the sheared lines.



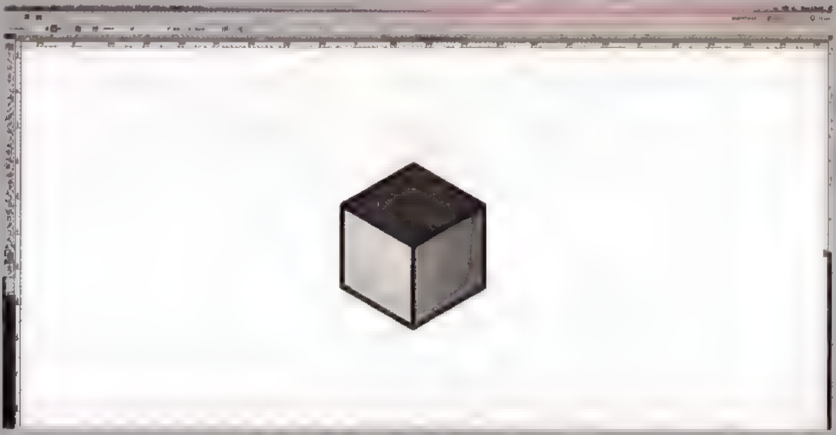
04___ Now draw a set of vertical lines through each intersection until you end up with the pattern shown above. A quick way is to draw a line at either end and use the Blend tool to fill the steps in-between. Once you have your grid drawn in lines, select everything and convert all the lines to guides (Ctrl/Cmd+5) to create your finished grid. →



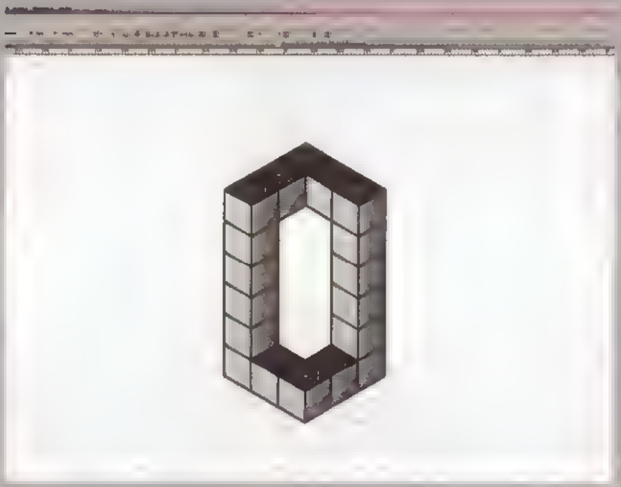
05___ If you haven't already, switch on Smart Guides (Ctrl/Cmd+U) and enable Snap to Point (Ctrl/Cmd+Alt/Opt+") to help you get precise positioning. To create the letters here, we'll construct a series of cubes along our 30-degree lines. Draw each side of a cube separately, working without fills at this stage.

Use Smart Guides

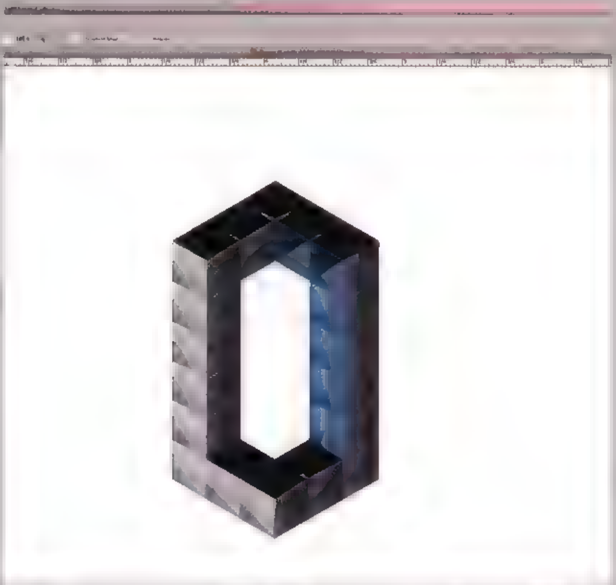
Make sure you always switch Smart Guides on when doing work that needs precision positioning. They might seem a little annoying at first, but you'll find they really speed up your workflow.



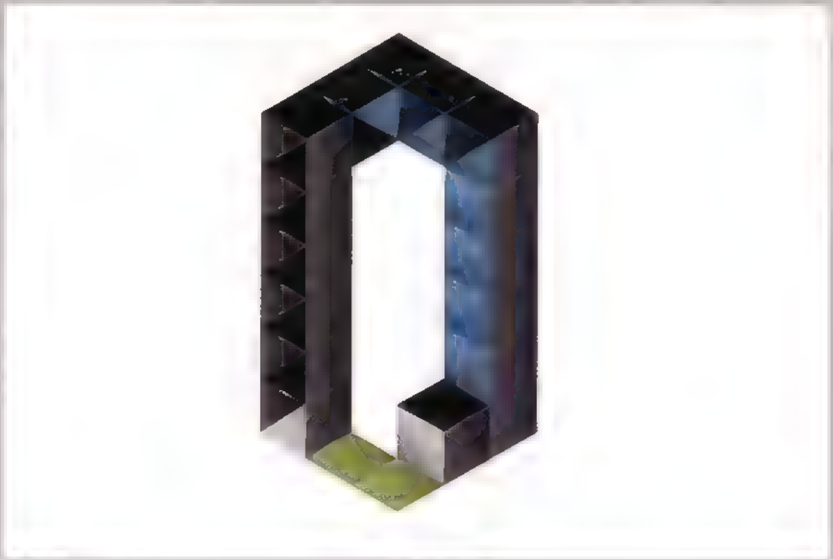
06___ Once you've drawn each side, put them together to build your first cube. Make sure you include the hidden faces, as you might want to reveal and use them later, depending on how you want your letters to look. At this point, it's worth adding some basic shading to define a light source. I've chosen to have my light source coming in from the bottom left hand side so that my top plane is dark, the right plane has a medium gradient and the left plane is fairly light.



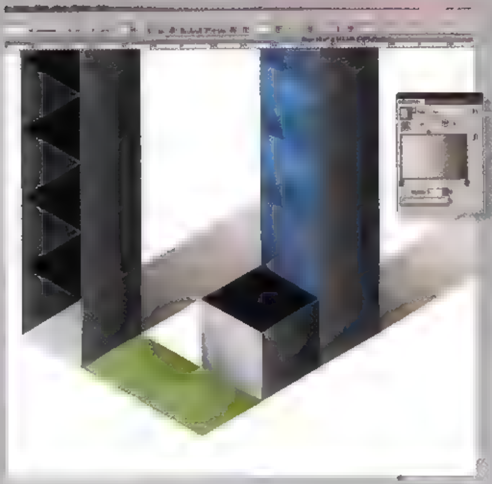
07___ Start to build your first letter by duplicating your cubes and repositioning them. This is where Smart Guides and Snap to Point will come in handy. You'll see that having a defined light source now helps in visualising the letters more clearly.



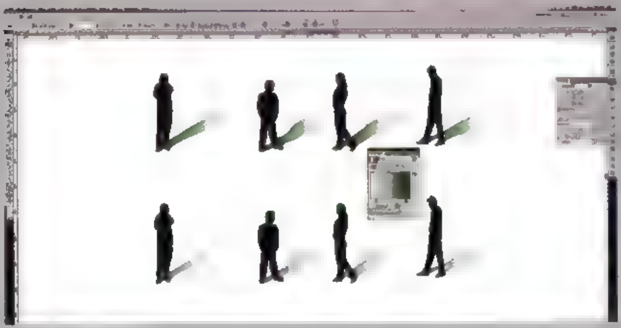
08___ Once you're happy with the shape of the letter, start adding in some more advanced colour. As we're not looking for perfect realism here, you can break the rules a little for aesthetic effect. For example, I've kept a medium-to-light gradient on each cube for interest, despite the fact that in reality there would only be one gradient on the whole face.



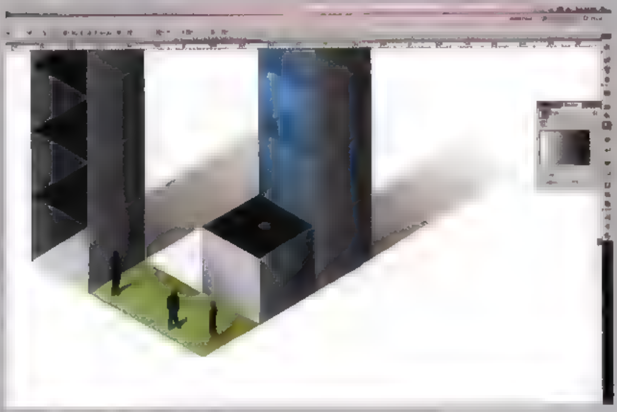
09___ Now make the letters more building-like. Start by removing some of the front faces to reveal what's behind. Colour these back faces a slightly darker shade for more depth. You can also add a blue gradient and play with opacity in the Transparency palette to create windows, and add a green gradient on the bottom planes to create grassy areas. Feel free to experiment with colours and textures to create soil, paving, monoblocking and anything else you can think of. I stuck with flat colour for my grass, but you could add some texture through Film Grain, for example.



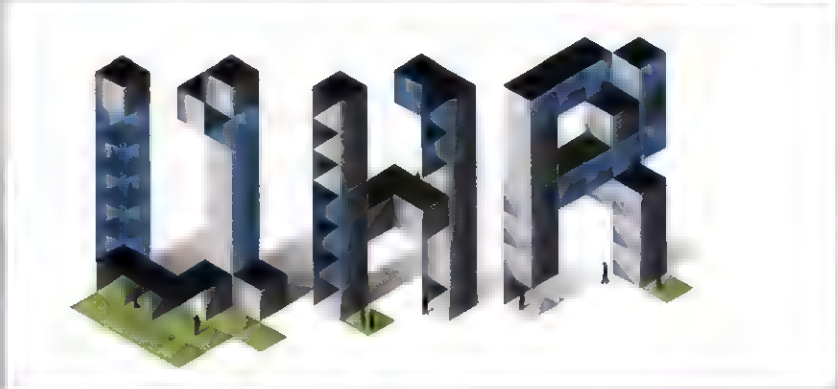
10_____ Once you've finished your base letter, draw in some shadows along the 30-degree grid, to indicate height in the structures. When you draw shadows, use opacity to represent a fade rather than simply fading to white. You'll gain a more natural look as well as the ability to add background colours underneath without any problems. Also remember that shadows aren't black – they're darker shades of the colour they're cast on. So if you have a shadow casting on grass, for example, it should be dark green to clear instead of black to white.



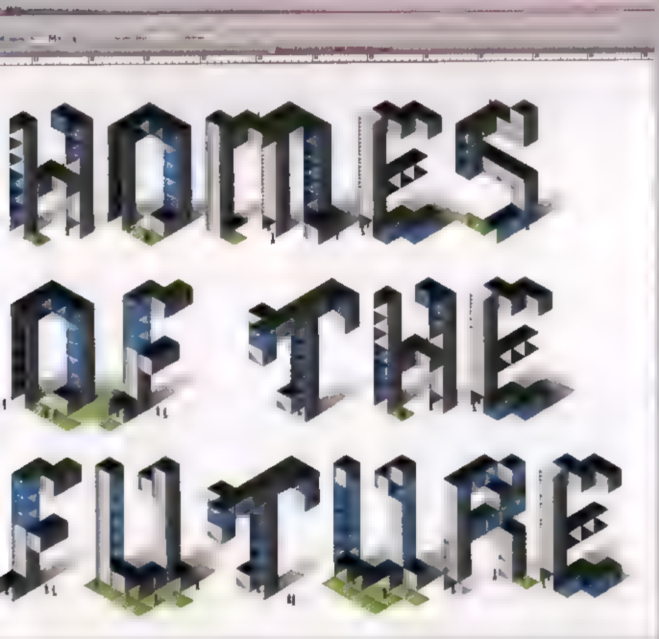
11_____ To give the letters some scale, we need to add another recognisable element. In this case, since we're working with buildings, it makes sense to add people into the scene. Draw some rough silhouettes and matching shadows, again on the 30-degree grid lines.



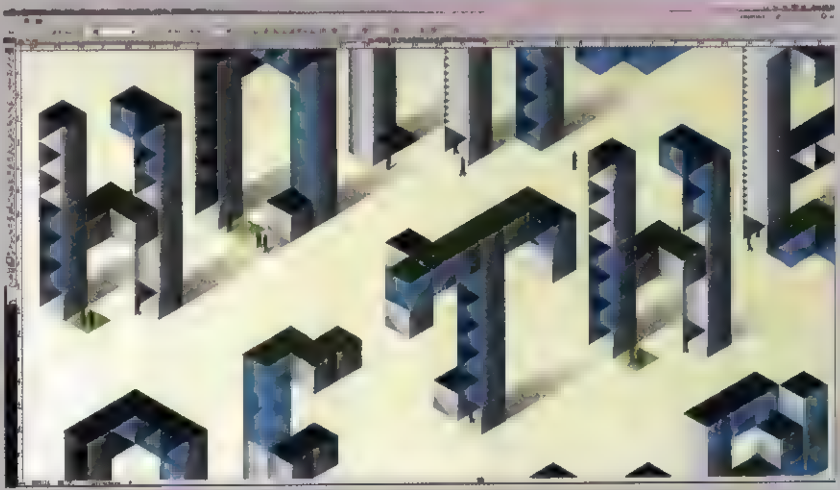
12_____ Once you have a small selection of figures, begin adding them into your scene. Again, make sure your shadow colouring matches, and try to place the shadows in positions that will add interest, such as inside windows and in alcoves.



13_____ Carry on as you did before and start to draw the other letters. Look for interesting compositions and see if there are different ways of rendering the same letter for variation. You might also want to add a large lawn, for example, and as long as it doesn't hinder readability too much, go ahead.



14_____ Once you've drawn all the letters you need, place them into the words you're going to illustrate and see how they look together. This is the point where you might spot that one of the letters doesn't quite work in the sequence, and is your chance to make any small improvements.

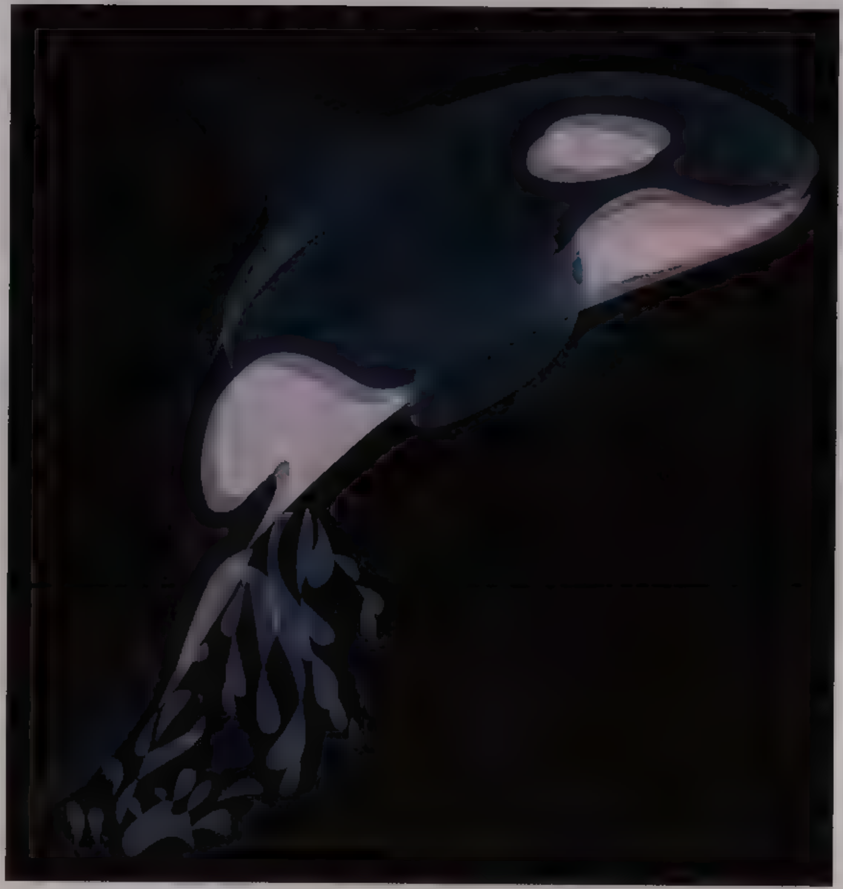


15_____ The final stage is to think about the composition you want in the image. In this instance, I wanted to carry on the isometric style, so I arranged the letters along the 30-degree angles on my grid. This gives a cool false perspective to the piece. As before, you can experiment and arrange the words however you like – staggered, descending or straight. Play around and see what looks best. The last thing I did was add a gradient in the background to ground the piece and accentuate my light source. I also added a light amount of Film Grain to help with the retro-futuristic feel.

Illustrator CS5 or later

Bring a fluorescent transparency to life

Ben the Illustrator explains how to use transparency and gradient tools to bring a dynamic creative edge to your work



Although a lot of Illustrator tools are fairly simple to grasp, using them with finesse and perfecting the finer details can take further practice. In this tutorial we'll look at a selection of transparency and gradient tools that aren't always used as subtly and beautifully as they can be. We'll create a lifelike but contemporary animal study here, but the techniques covered can be applied to any subject matter that requires a striking dynamic look or an elegant subtle shine, from branding to character design.

In my opinion, technical tricks should be secondary to the subject matter: there is no need to overemphasise a glow or a gradient when the natural form of your subject can stand up for itself. In this tutorial you'll learn subtler tricks that, in the end, will result in higher-quality artwork.

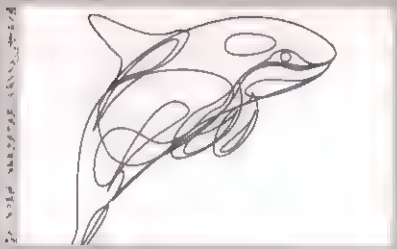
Ben O'Brien
— Working under the name of Ben the Illustrator, Ben O'Brien's colourful graphic illustrations have been pasted all over everything from calendars to cars and from trainers to train stations www.bentheillustrator.com

Time needed
2 hours

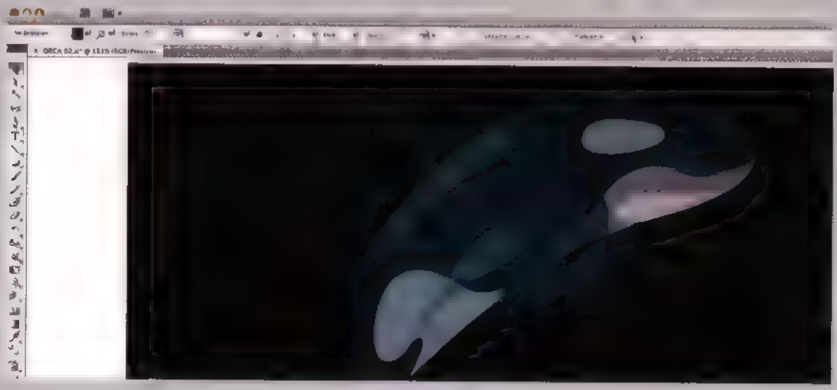
Assets
You'll find the full size screengrabs for each step of this project at www.computerarts.co.uk/illustratoressentials

Skills
- Use the Gradient Mesh tool
- Make opacity masks
- Work with colours and transparency

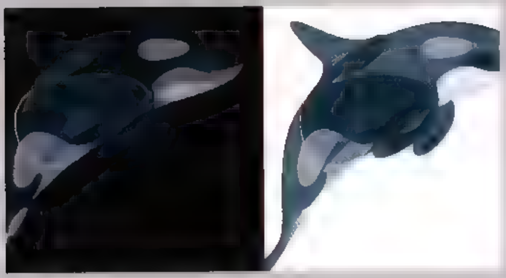
01 — Start with a pencil drawing: you can produce this freehand or using a photo for reference. However you create your line drawing, keep the shapes as simple as possible while still achieving the look of your chosen subject matter. It's just shape-making there's no need for sketchy lines or shading.



02 — Trace your artwork using the Pen tool. Remember that every shape you create is going to be semi-transparent, so even if it's behind another shape it'll still be visible – every line of every shape has to be perfect and fit with the overall flow of the illustration.



03 — Change your shapes to block colours without outlines (losing the outlines makes for a more realistic look). Next, select all your shapes and, in the Transparency panel, change the opacity to 65%. Feel free to play with this value.

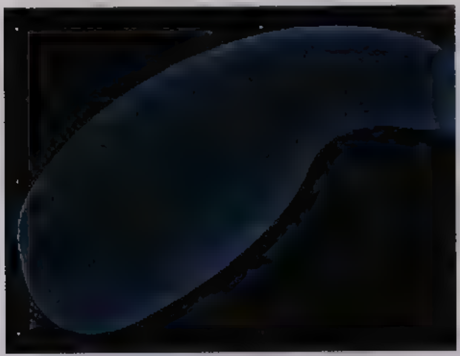


04____ Colours work very differently when they're semi-transparent. If you look at the highlighted block, which is where two shapes overlap, on the black background it appears lighter than its neighbouring blocks, whereas on the white background it's darker. Experiment with how light and dark colours change once they're semi-transparent and layered.

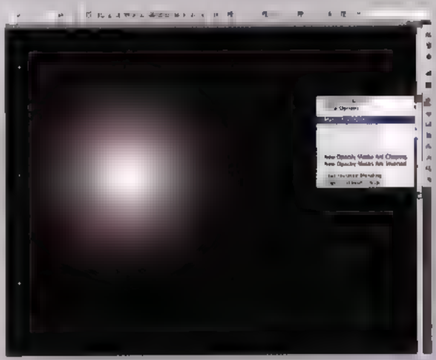
05____ To create a glow on a shape, select the shape then choose the Gradient Mesh tool. Tap the Gradient Mesh cursor on an outline: you'll see that it slices your shape and starts to make a 3D form. Tap on any line and it will split in half, forming more gradient lines.

DO THE MATHS

When layering semi-transparent shapes, you can calculate how many layered shapes will hide lower layers. At 50% opacity, overlapping two shapes doesn't create something 100% opaque. The overlapping shape at 50% opacity will bring their combined opacity to 75% hiding a further 50% of what was visible. You could overlap seven shapes before the lower layers would become hidden.



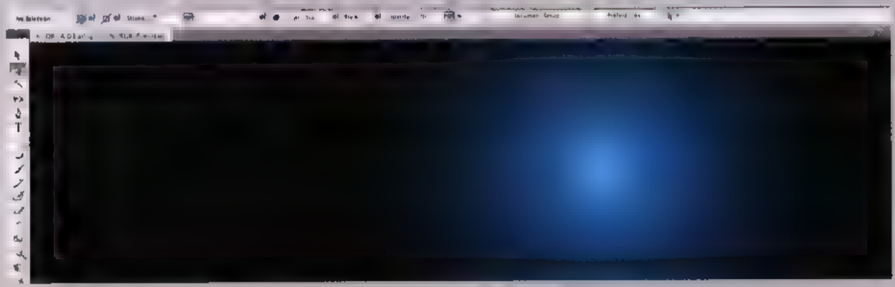
06____ Continue creating a mesh. The more mesh lines you create, the more form your shape will have. Hold down Opt/Alt to delete a mesh line. To add a gradient, use the Direct Selection tool to pick all the points you want colour added to, then choose a colour from the palette.



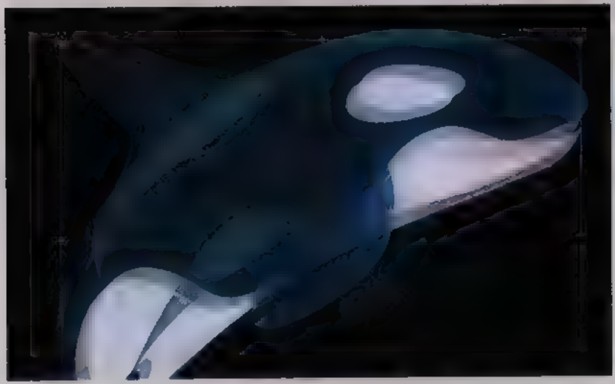
07____ The colours will vary depending on whether they're layered over dark or light colours. To add more dynamism, try a circular opacity mask. First, create a circle and duplicate it in the Layers panel. Next, using the Gradient panel, add a radial gradient from white in the centre out to black.

NO NEED FOR A PALETTE

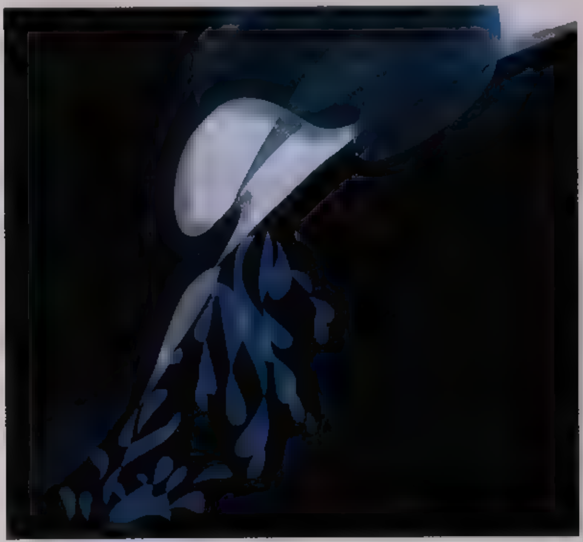
Since we're layering semi-transparent shapes, we have no need to use a huge array of colours. Two shapes of the same colour, when overlapped, will create a new colour; overlap a third shape of a second colour and you've got yet another variation. This illustration uses three different colours: dark blue, light blue and grey/white, and yet if we broke apart the flat image we'd find 10 or more subtly different colours.



08____ With both circles selected, choose Make Opacity Mask from the Transparency panel menu, and select a colour. Everything that was white in the radial gradient will take that colour; everything that was black will now be 100% transparent. Experiment with placing this circle, in various colours, behind your artwork.



09____ Here's one final technique that adds a simple but effective fluid fluorescence. Select various shapes, then, holding down the Shift and Opt/Alt keys, hit an arrow key. Your shape will be duplicated and offset. As we're working with semi-transparent shapes, you'll start to create a nice movement effect.



10____ Even with simple illustrated shapes you'll find that it really is worth taking your time with transparencies. The smallest alteration can make a big difference, and subtle gradients and transparencies can really bring an unbeatable finesse to your illustration work.

Illustrator CS3 or later

Prepare a dieline for production

Honey Creative's head of production **Duncan Eldridge** reveals his process for getting packaging ready for print

If you've worked on packaging design projects, you'll probably be familiar with using Illustrator to create dielines. However, there are still lots of nifty ways to squeeze the most out of the software that you may not yet be aware of.

Using the example of a range of microwavable meal containers we created for Tesco, I'll talk you through how to maximize Illustrator's potential at every step of the design process. In this instance the client wanted a 'watch-strap' style sleeve that allowed the consumer to see the fresh food ingredients in the clear pot. The design had to be informative yet still let the product speak.

When working on a packaging project, establishing the client's expectations as well any constraints early in the design process is the key to success. Ideally arrange a pre-production meeting with the client and the printer, and take hard copies of the pack visuals along to ensure that everyone round the table sees them. This will establish whether everyone's expectations of the final design are the same, and save your money, time and professional reputation in the long run.

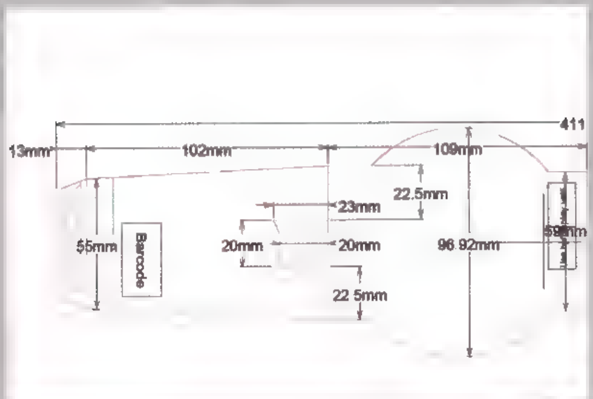
Duncan Eldridge
— After graduating from Salford Uni in 1993, Duncan worked in pre-press until the late 90s, when he defected to the design industry. He's specialised in brand packaging since 2000, and became Honey Creative's head of production back in 2009. www.honeycreative.co.uk

Time needed
One hour

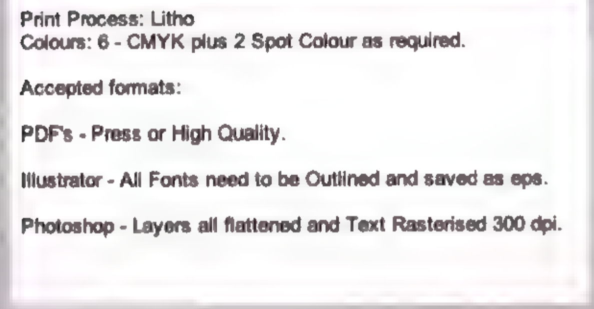
Skills
- Set up and test a packaging dieline
- Produce colour separations for print
- Add detailed production notes for your printer

Assets
You'll find the full size screengrabs for each step of this project at www.computerarts.co.uk/illustratoressentials

TESCO
MEAT + VEG PO
SMOKY
CHICKEN
PRAW
GUMBO
Each pack contains
Calories
87
4%
Sugar
8.1g
14%
Fat
4.1g
5%
Saturates
2g
7%
of your guideline daily amount



01____ Before starting work you should be equipped with a dieline (or cutter) that is to scale, includes all folds, trim and bleed, indicates visible, hidden and any 'distorted' areas, and shows print-free glue or seal areas as well as date code and barcode areas. Mocking it up will help clarify how the pack will be displayed, and show any potential issues. Also consider the environment in which the pack will be displayed. Is there any additional shelf-ready packaging or shelving that might obscure the low portion of the pack? If so, indicate this on the dieline.



Print Process: Litho
Colours: 6 - CMYK plus 2 Spot Colour as required.

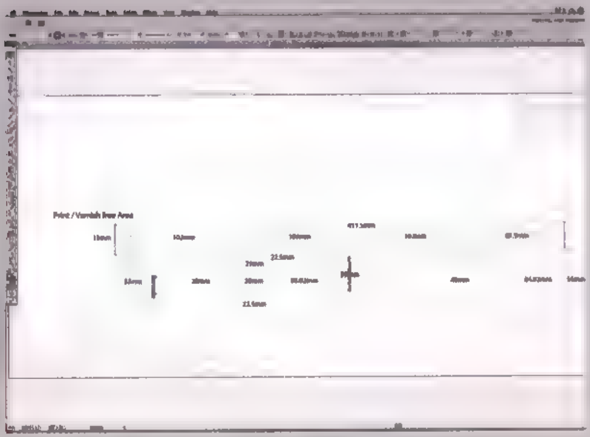
Accepted formats:

PDF's - Press or High Quality.

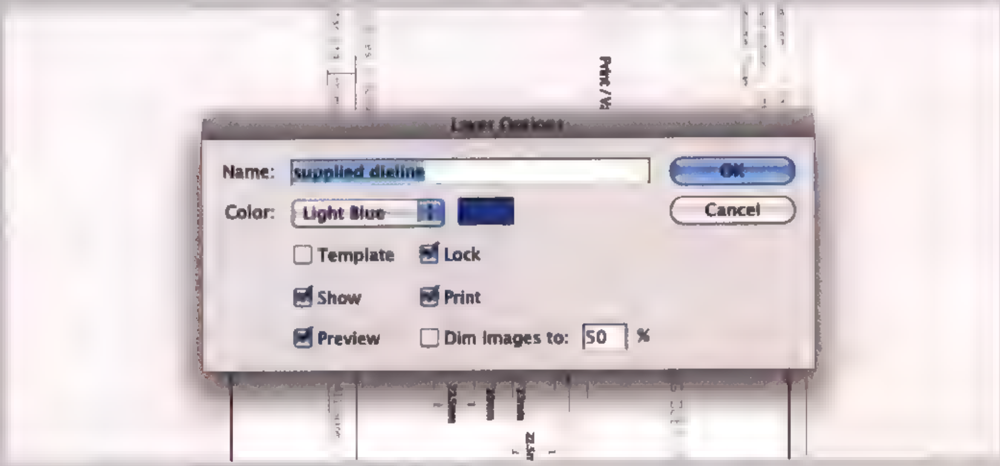
Illustrator - All Fonts need to be Outlined and saved as eps.

Photoshop - Layers all flattened and Text Rasterised 300 dpi.

02____ If you are generating the dieline yourself, consult and involve the printer. Make sure they can mass-produce the pack within the brief's constraints, and don't start work until they have approved it. Don't be too precious – if the printer wants to redraw it and supply back to you, let them. And don't start work until you have received a print spec. At the very least this should include the print process and number of colours available.



03____ Open your dieline in Illustrator and double check that it's to size by selecting an element and cross-referencing its size values in the Control panel against what's specified in the mark-up. Rotate the cutter if necessary and adjust your artboard size to accommodate additional mark-ups you might need to add later. Go to File>Document Colour Mode and make sure 'CMYK' colour is checked. Then save the file, renaming it according to the packaging you are producing. Include some reference for the cutter in your file name. Save as Illustrator 3 or 4 with PDF compatibility ticked.

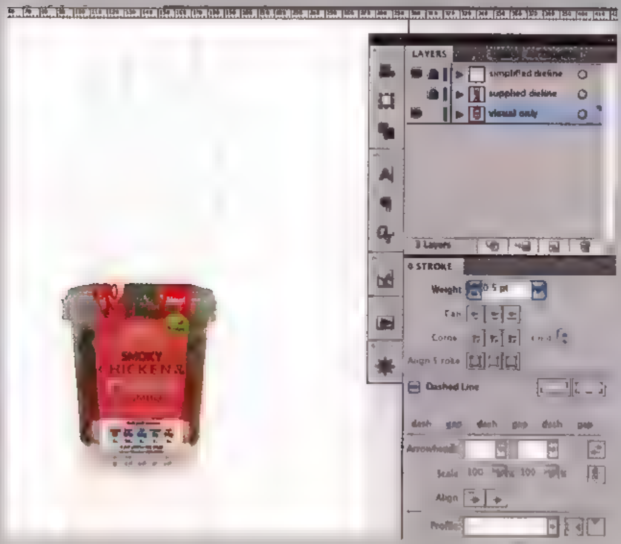


Name: supplied dieline
Color: Light Blue
☐ Template ☑ Lock
☑ Show ☑ Print
☑ Preview ☐ Dim Images to: 50 %

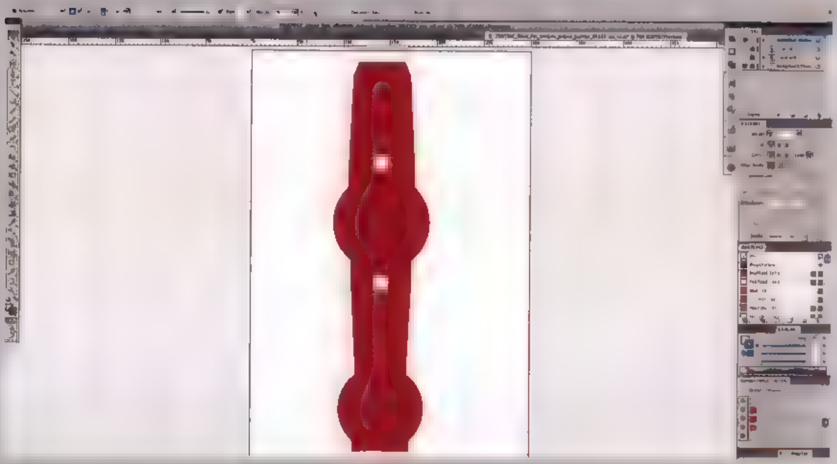
04____ In the Layers palette rename the cutter guide layer as 'Supplied Dieline'. Duplicate the layer and rename it 'Simplified Dieline'. Delete all elements other than the trim, folds, barcode, date code and non-printing areas. Then go to Edit>Select All. Go to Window>Colours and define all the strokes with a colour that is clearly visible against the design underneath, then go to Window>Output>Attributes and check Overprint. Turn the Supplied Dieline layer's visibility off.

→

○ FEATURES
○ QUICK SKILLS
○ TUTORIALS
○ SHOWCASE


LAYERS
simplified dieline
supplied dieline
visual only
3 Layers
STROKE
Weight
Cap
Corner
Align Stroke
Dashed Line
dash
gap
Arrowheads
Scale
Align
Profile
SMOKY
CHICKEN &

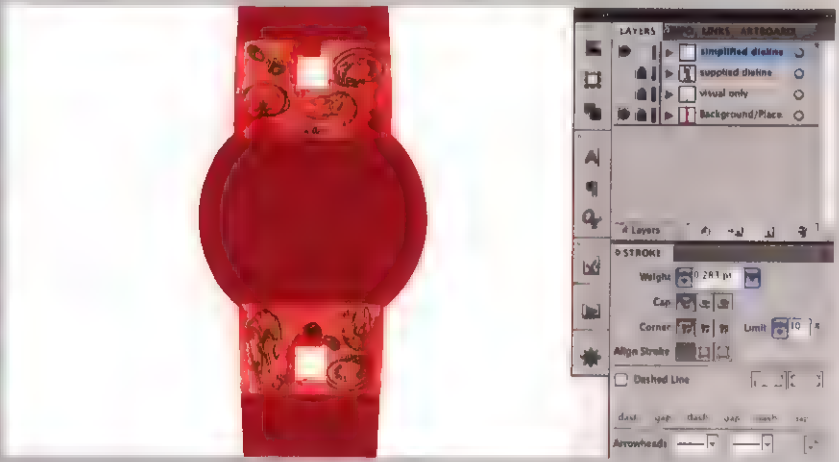
05____Create a new layer below the simplified dieline named 'Visual Only'. Open your signed-off design visual, drag over the design with the Selection tool (V) then copy the whole file. Close the file and paste it under the Simplified Dieline layer, then position it as accurately as possible.



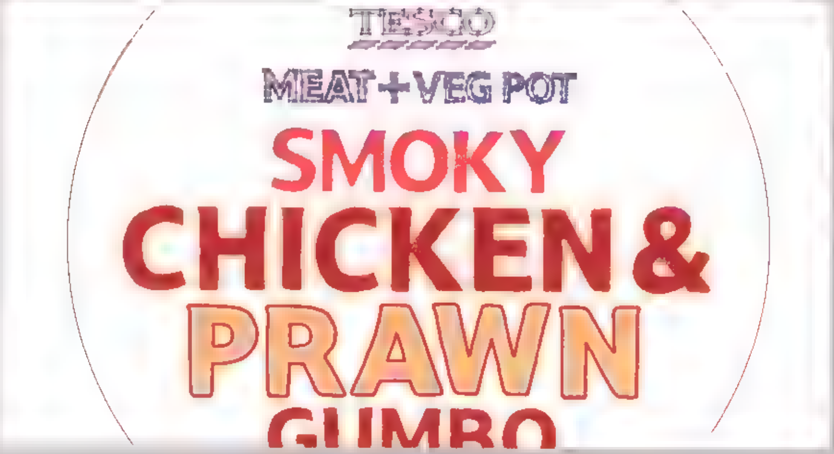
06____If the design has any full-bleed elements then use the line work from the Supplied Dieline layer to create a background with bleed. Create a new layer below the Visual Only layer titled 'Background/Placed Images'. If the supplied dieline has a defined bleed area, then select the path with the Selection tool and duplicate it onto Option, then drag down to the Background/Placed Images layer. If the dieline only has the trim, duplicate it and go to Object>Path>Offset Path to create a bleed area. Depending on the condition of the supplied dieline, you may have to work your way round the trim using Ctrl/Cmd+J to join the path up into one compound.

TESCO
MEAT + VEG POT
SMOKY

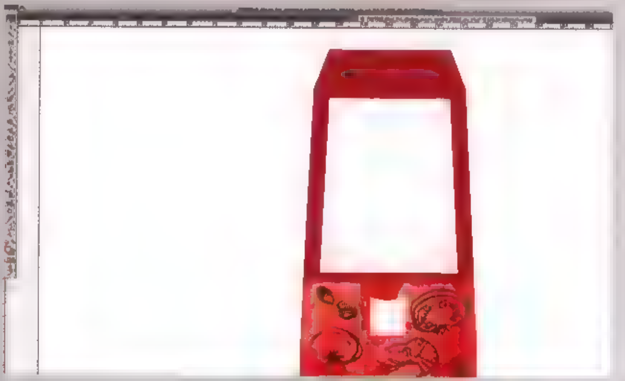
07____Refer to the brand's packaging guidelines and check that all design elements comply with them, make amendments if necessary, and get client sign-off.


LAYERS
simplified dieline
supplied dieline
visual only
Background/Place
4 Layers
STROKE
Weight
Cap
Corner
Limit
Align Stroke
Dashed Line
Arrowheads

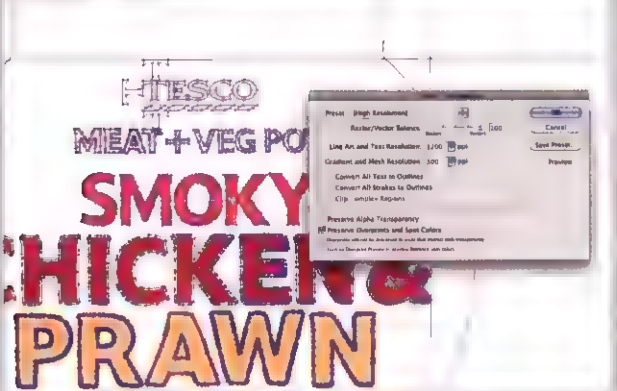
08____Populate the background layer with all the full-bleed elements of the design. Re-link any low-res positional images with hi-res CMYK PSDs or TIFs. Delete these elements from the Visual Only layer.


TESCO
MEAT + VEG POT
SMOKY
CHICKEN &
PRAWN
GUMBO

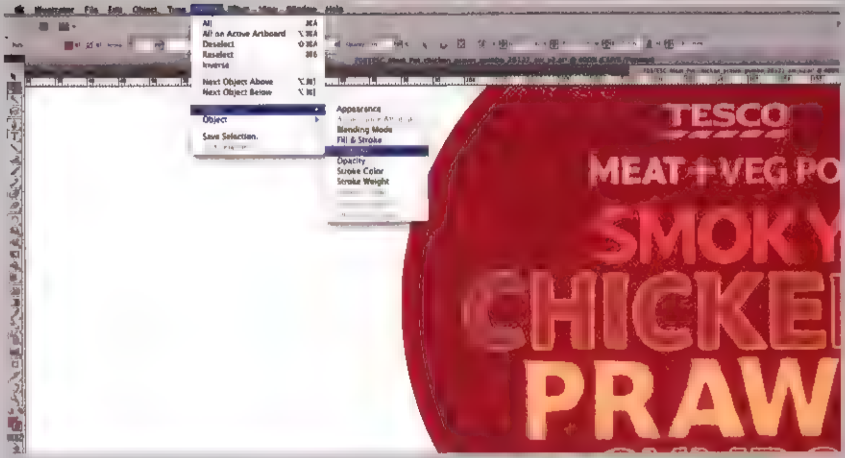
09____Now you should just have graphic elements on the Visual Only layer, such as logos, title, descriptor and so on. Create a duplicate of this layer below Visual Only, and name it 'Graphics'.



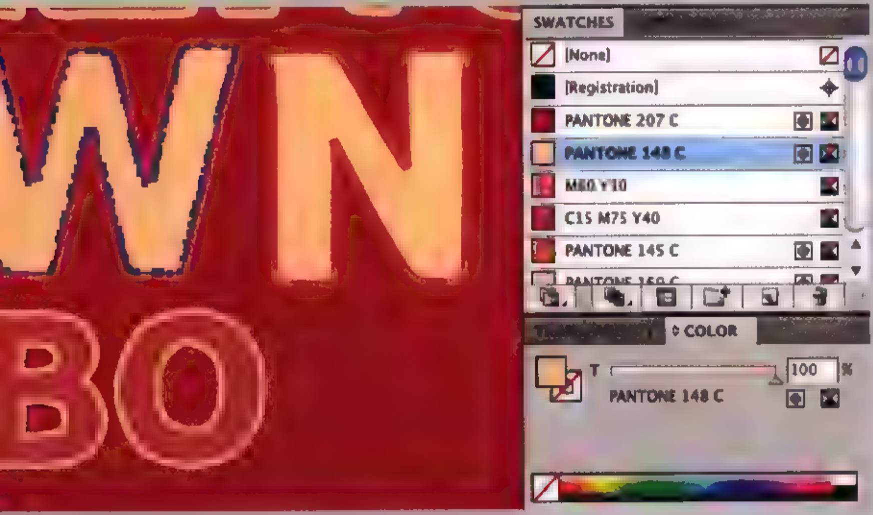
10____You may want to create a separate layer for any back of pack (BOP) content. If it is upside down, select it and spin it 180 degrees to read it without having to rotate the entire design. The example shown here has no back of pack content, as in this instance the repro house had a kit of parts that enabled them to populate a BOP quickly and consistently.


TESCO
MEAT+VEG PO
SMOKY
CHICKEN&
PRAWN
Convert All Text to Outlines
Convert All Strokes to Outlines
Preserve Alpha Transparency
Preserve Overprints and Spot Colors
Cancel
Save Preset...
Preview

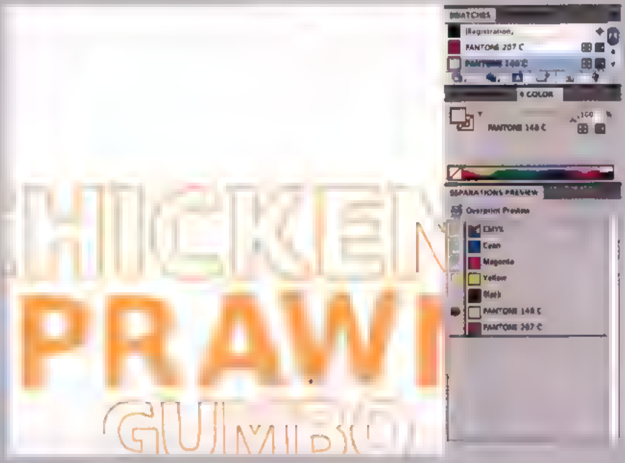
11____ Now expand any effects. Select All (Ctrl/Cmd A) and go to Object>Expand. Expand appearance on any strokes with complex art brushes by selecting Object>Expand Appearance and calculate the minimum stroke. Avoid going below .25pt. If in doubt, check the print spec for minimum positive/negative stroke weight. If there's any transparency involving spot colours then flatten it (Object>Flatten Transparency) and recreate using tints of the relevant spot colour (Window>Colour).


All
All on Active Artboard
Deselect
Reselect
Inverse
Next Object Above
Next Object Below
Object
Save Selection...
Appearance
Blending Mode
Fill & Stroke
Opacity
Stroke Color
Stroke Weight
TESCO
MEAT+VEG PO
SMOKY
CHICKEN
PRAW

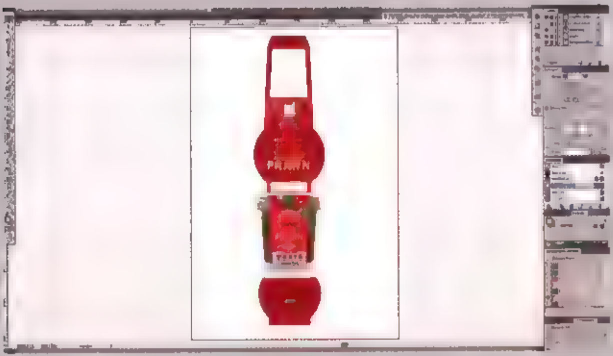
12____ Open the Swatches panel (F5). Use the Direct Selection tool (A) to select an element and go to Select>Same>Fill or Stroke Colour. Now redefine the fills/strokes using a Global Swatch by Alt/Opt+clicking the swatch, and checking the 'Global' box. Round the CMYK values up or down to create 'clean' breakdowns, such as c30 m5 y10 k0 not c28.63 m2 y11.7 k0. When using the 'Same' selection function make sure that nothing is missed that looks like it should share the same swatch.


WN
BO
SWATCHES
[None]
[Registration]
PANTONE 207 C
PANTONE 148 C
M60 Y10
C15 M75 Y40
PANTONE 145 C
PANTONE 150 C
COLOR
T
100
%
PANTONE 148 C

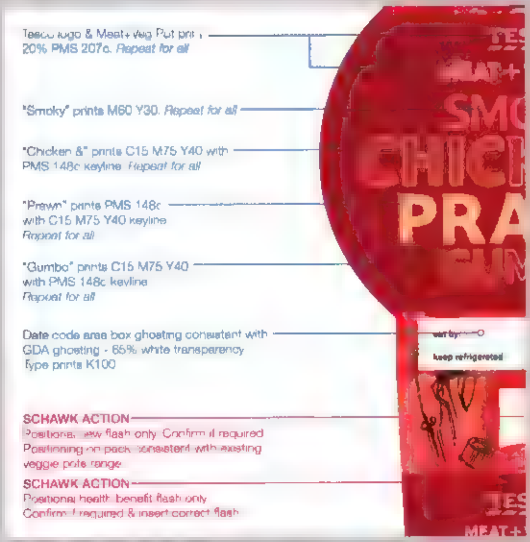
13____ Assign all spot colours to one from a Pantone library by going to Window>Swatch Libraries>Colour Books. Change the Swatches panel view to 'Small List' (CS3/4) or 'Name' (CS5). You can quickly see if a colour is set up to print as a spot because it should have an accompanying symbol next to the swatch name.


SWATCHES
[Registration]
PANTONE 207 C
PANTONE 148 C
COLOR
PANTONE 148 C
SEPARATIONS PREVIEW
Overprint Preview
CMYK
Cyan
Magenta
Yellow
Black
PANTONE 148 C
PANTONE 207 C
CHICKEN
PRAWN
GUMBO

14____ When you've finished, check separations by opening the AI file in Acrobat and go to Advanced>Print Production> Output Preview (CS3/4), or in Illustrator CS5 go to Window> Output>Separations Preview. Work through the separations turning each colour's view on and off to check that the design is separating correctly.



15____ Open the original design visual and repeat step 5. Toggle the Visual Only layer's view on and off a few times in the Layers palette – you will immediately notice any discrepancies that may have occurred while creating the design file such as missing or colour changes. If all's well then delete the Visual Only layer and its contents.



Tesco logo & Meat+Veg Pot prints 20% PMS 207c. *Repeat for all*

"Smoky" prints M60 Y30. *Repeat for all*

"Chicken &" prints C15 M75 Y40 with PMS 148c keyline. *Repeat for all*

"Prawn" prints PMS 148c with C15 M75 Y40 keyline *Repeat for all*

"Gumbo" prints C15 M75 Y40 with PMS 148c keyline *Repeat for all*

Date code area box ghosting consistent with GDA ghosting - 65% white transparency Type prints K100

SCHAWK ACTION
Positional new flash only. Confirm if required
Positioning on pack consistent with existing veggie pots range

SCHAWK ACTION
Positional health benefit flash only
Confirm if required & insert correct flash

keep refrigerated

16____ Create a new layer at the top of your Layer stack titled 'Mark-up'. Use a standardised font for your comments that's distinct from those used in the design. Emphasise any action points in bold that need addressing at repro stage such as: 'Create 4 Colour Process plus Spot DCS file' or 'Insert correct barcode'. Now you have a complete set of repro-ready artwork with which to create a PDF for client approval.

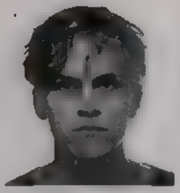
Illustrator CS3 or later

Master Inner Glow for vector shading

Siggi Odds walks through a time-saving technique for adding shadows and highlights to your illustration work

By shading your illustrations with gradients and effects, rather than tackling it in Photoshop, you retain the full scalability of vectors. This is particularly important if your images will be used in a broad range of sizes and applications: I've used this particular technique to create images for everything from web banners to large-scale window decorations.

Designers often seem to be afraid of using effects in Illustrator, but I personally find them to be an essential part of my workflow. Here, I'll demonstrate how to use the Inner Glow effect to make odd-shaped gradients, creating some slick shading.

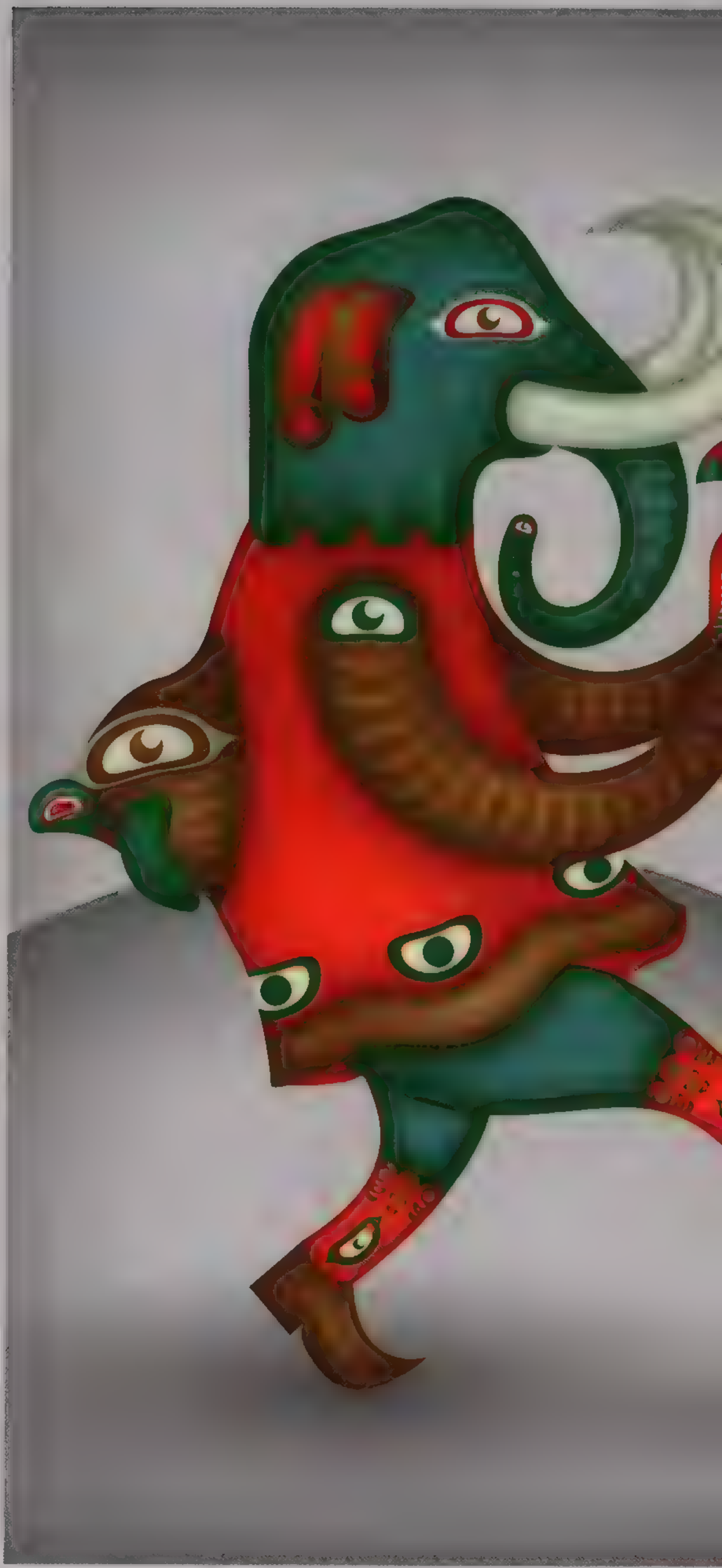


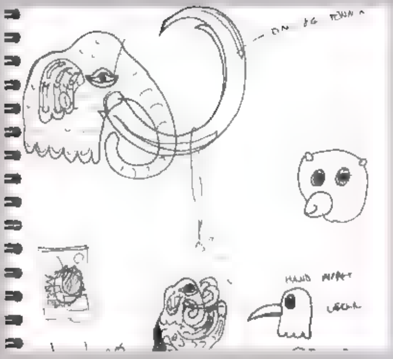
Siggi Odds
— Siggi Odds is the working moniker of Icelandic graphic designer and illustrator Sigurður Oddsson. From his base in the heart of Reykjavík, he produces work for a broad range of international and local clients. www.siggiodds.com

Time needed
5-10 hours

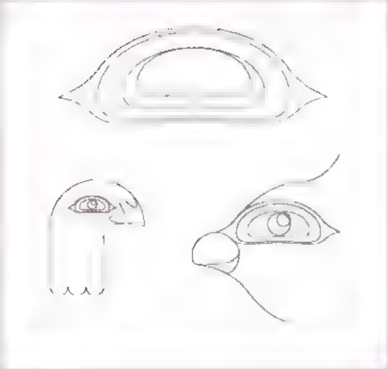
Skills
- Define a simple colour palette
- Colour quickly with Live Paint
- Add shading with the Inner Glow effect

Assets
You'll find the full size screengrabs for each step of this project at www.computerarts.co.uk/illustratoressentials



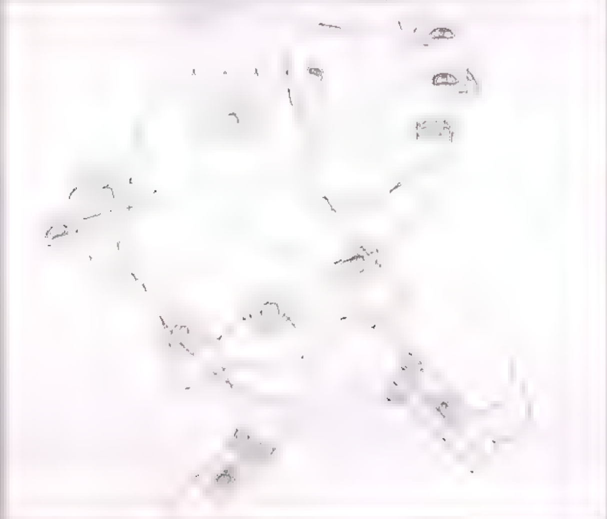


01____Begin by making a very rough sketch on paper of what you're going to draw, gathering references and making a list of everything that you want to have in the illustration.

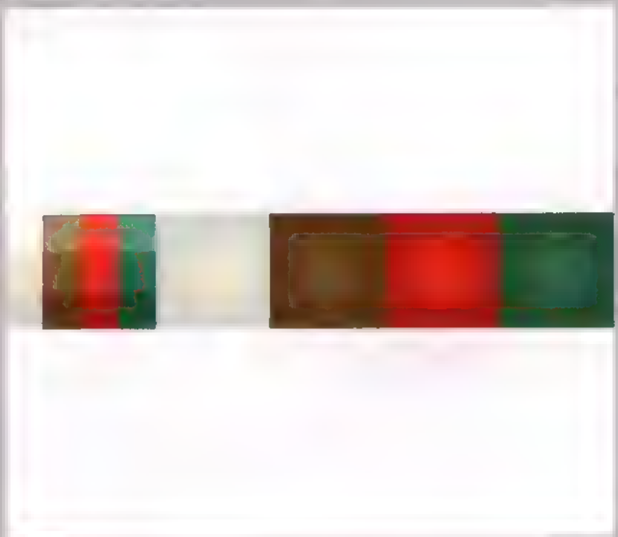


02____Go into Illustrator, select the Pen and Pencil tools, and begin drawing some of the elements of your design with a stroke outline.

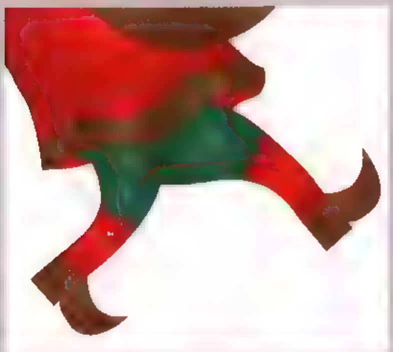
03____Now start drawing the main elements of the design, still using the Pen and Pencil tools as well as some geometric elements, and begin to compose the final image.



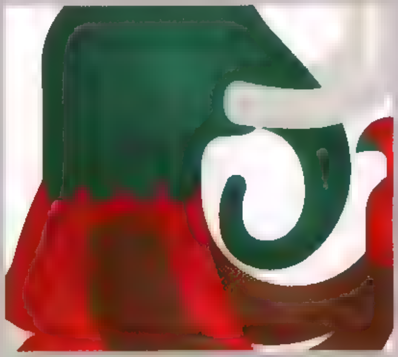
04____Create a new layer for any finer details, to keep it separate from the basic outline for the time being – this makes it easier to colour the main underlying shapes quickly.



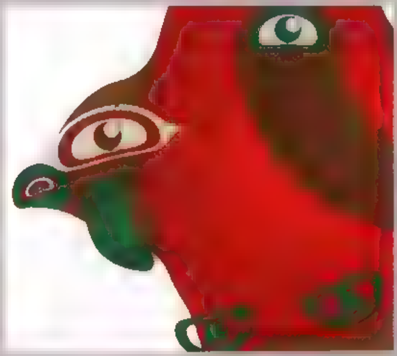
05____Before colouring, make your basic palette. I chose three main colours for this illustration and made shades of those colours, as well as gradients, for later use.



06____Next, hide the detail layer, select the main outline and start colouring the shapes with Live Paint. With the Eyedropper tool, select the gradients and hues from your palette to colour the whole layer.

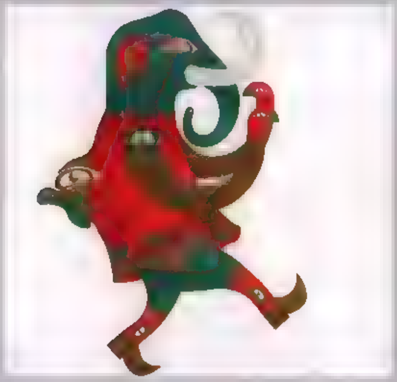


07____After colouring this layer, delete the stroke outlines, expand the Live Paint group and merge/unite the various shapes that need to be combined using the options in the Pathfinder panel.

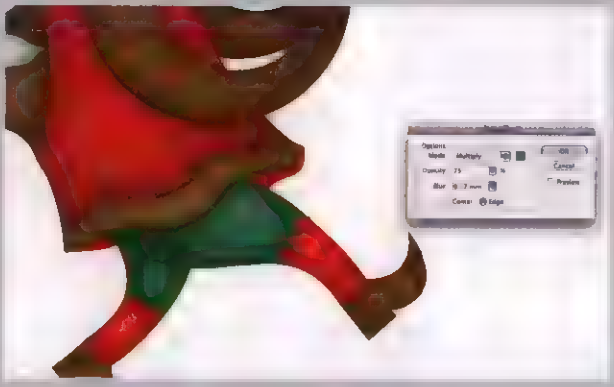


08____Now make the detail layer visible and repeat step 7 for the main outline layer. Use Live Paint, delete strokes, and expand and merge the shapes as necessary using the Pathfinder panel options.

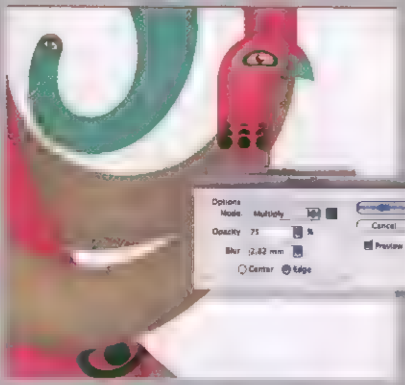
→



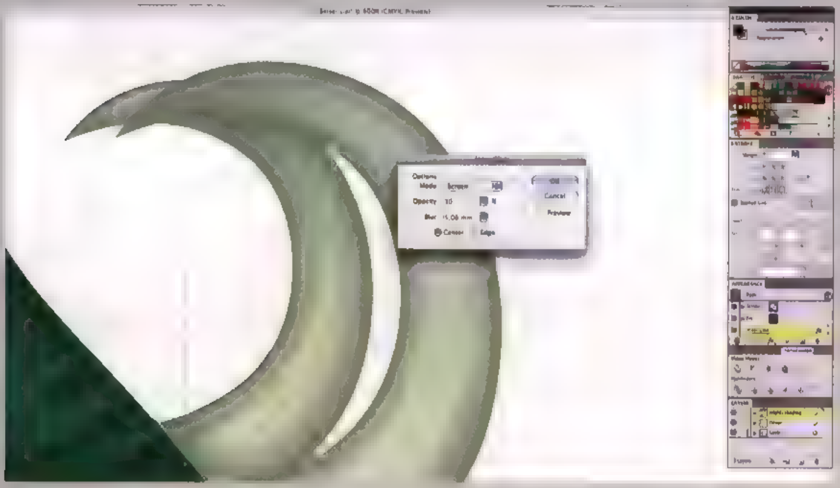
09____At this stage, the basic shape and colouring work is done, although it can always be polished in the later stages. Now it's time to begin to work on the shading.



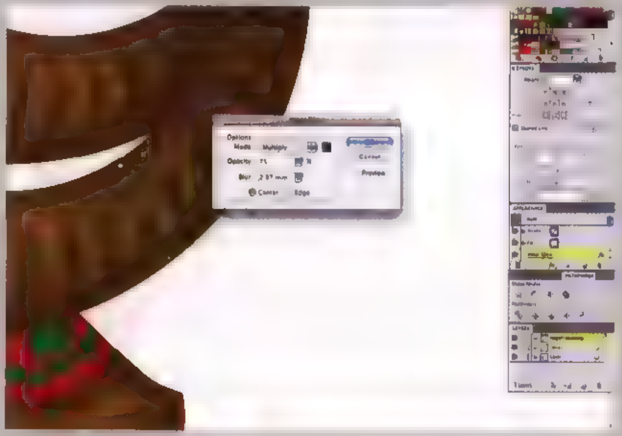
10____Begin shading the basic shape layer and hide the detail layer. Go to Effect>Stylize>Inner Glow for the shading, with Mode set to Multiply and Opacity set to 75%. Choose a darker colour from your original palette as the shading colour. Then adjust the blur until you're satisfied.



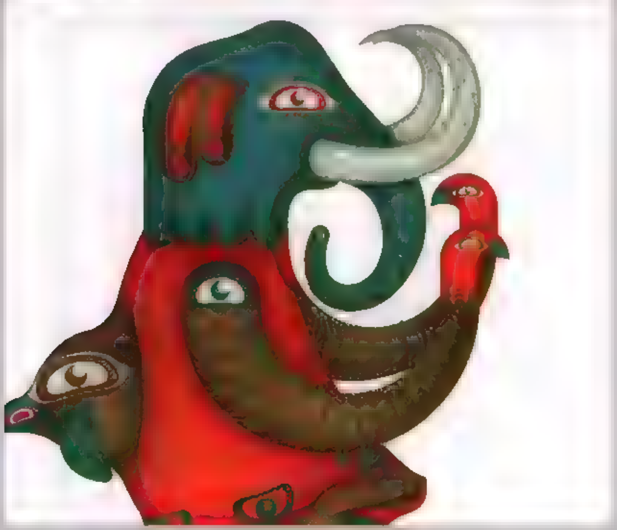
11____Repeat this process for all the colours, as well as in the detail layer, until all the coloured shapes that you want to be shaded have been treated with the Inner Glow effect.



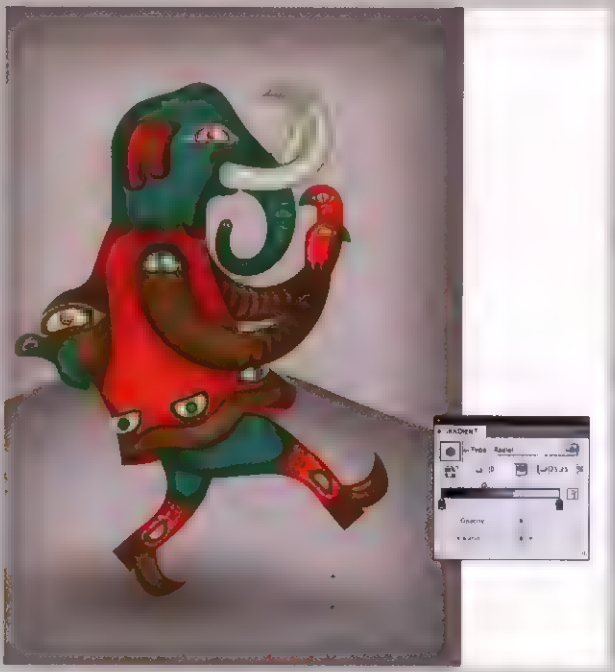
12____Now create a new layer for highlights and shading. For highlights, draw the shapes with the Pencil tool and colour them. Then select the Screen Blending mode for the white Inner Glow from the centre, and adjust the Blur level until the highlight looks smooth.



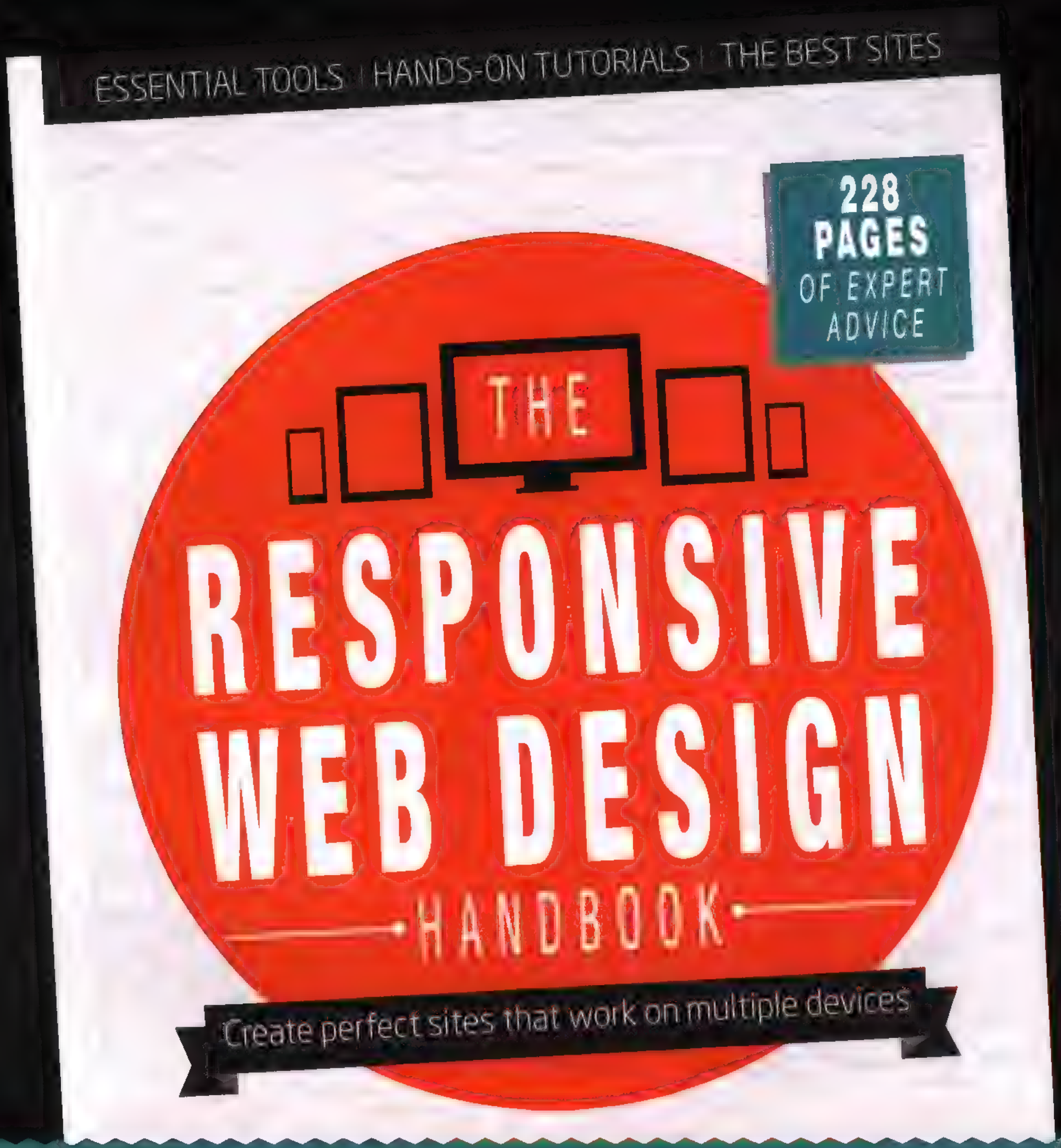
13____For shading, draw the shapes the same way as earlier, and colour them white. Add a black Inner Glow from the centre, adjust the levels until it looks right, and then select the Multiply mode. For the highlights and shading it can help to copy and paste a lot of the shapes, so you don't have to repeat this process too many times.



14____After a good session of drawing, copying and pasting the shading and highlights, the image is almost complete. Make any minor adjustments to colour and polish the details. Now all it needs is a subtle background.



15____For the background, use the Inner Glow effect with a mid-range grey. Here, I've drawn a subtle landscape to give a sense of space, and added some shadow with a radial gradient multiplied on the background.

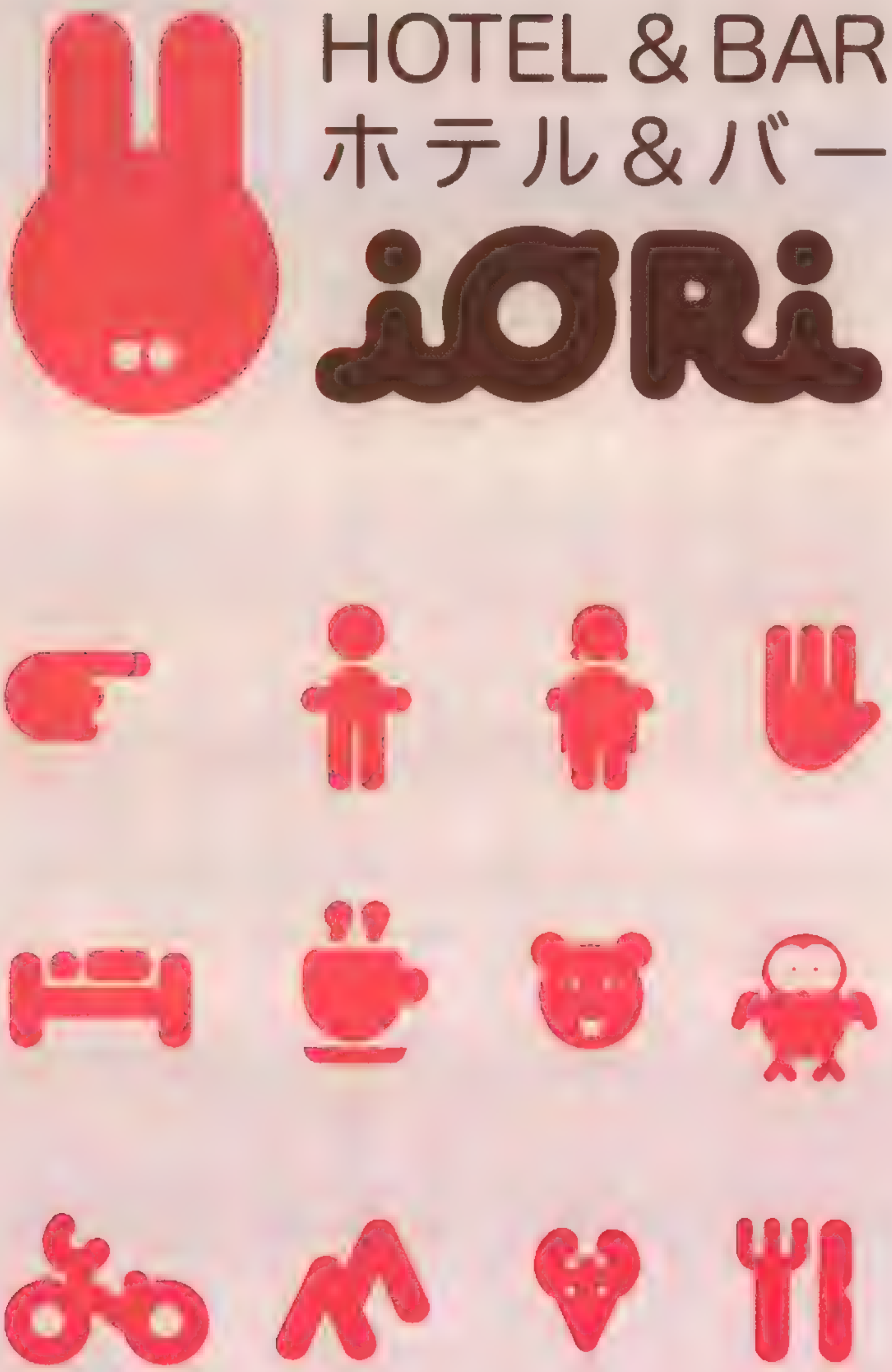

ESSENTIAL TOOLS | HANDS-ON TUTORIALS | THE BEST SITES
228 PAGES OF EXPERT ADVICE
THE
RESPONSIVE WEB DESIGN
HANDBOOK
Create perfect sites that work on multiple devices

ON SALE NOW!

Responsive web design is one of the hottest topics right now, and this guide includes everything you need to get started! With contributions by the leading experts of the movement, including Ethan Marcotte, Brad Frost and Luke Wroblewski, as well as more than 20 practical projects covering both the basics and advanced strategies, you'll create excellent responsive experiences in no time.

Special chapters of this guide look at the best tools to use, the best sites for your inspiration and how to build responsive sites in WordPress and Drupal. Plus, we uncover common problems and pitfalls and how to avoid them. Join the revolution now!

A Creativemasterclass from the makers of .net


HOTEL & BAR
ホテル&バー
iORi

Illustrator CS3 or later

Design a coherent branding solution

Sebastián Litmanovich reveals how to create a range of original branding elements from a logo design

I was recently commissioned by a hotel to expand its branding elements, and provide a set of signs and illustrations in the same style as its current identity. One easy and fast solution for doing this is to combine and rearrange the shapes of an existing logo or typeface into new forms.

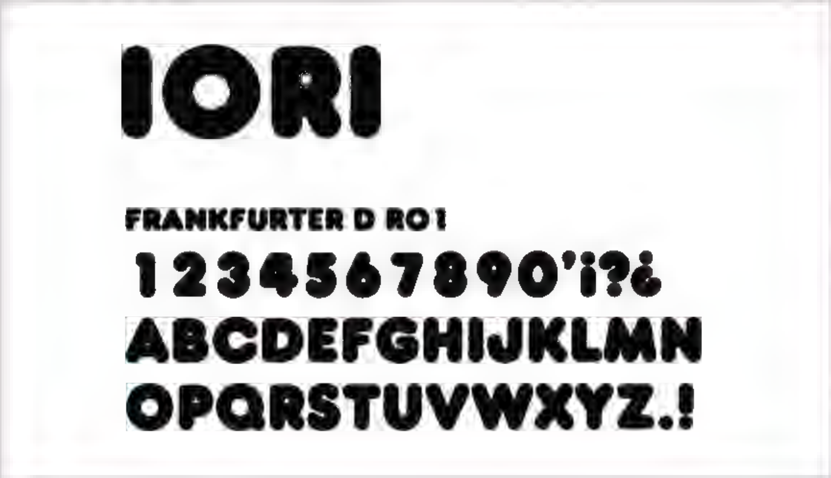
Over the following pages, I'll walk you through how to create a set of vector icons using a logo as a starting point. It's a particularly good technique for designers who are not professional illustrators. The key here is to enjoy the process as if it were a game – imagine it's a puzzle.

Sebastián Litmanovich
— Tea Time Studio founder Sebastián studied with design legend Milton Glaser and for many years has been working on a wide range of creative projects, including advertising campaigns, branding projects and videos.
www.teatimestudio.com

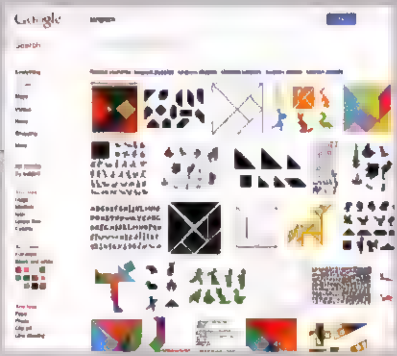
Time needed
1 hour

Assets
You'll find the full size screengrabs for each step of this project at www.computerarts.co.uk/illustratoressentials

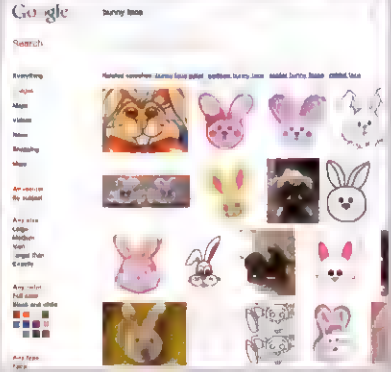
Skills
- Design vector elements
- Create a coherent branding solution



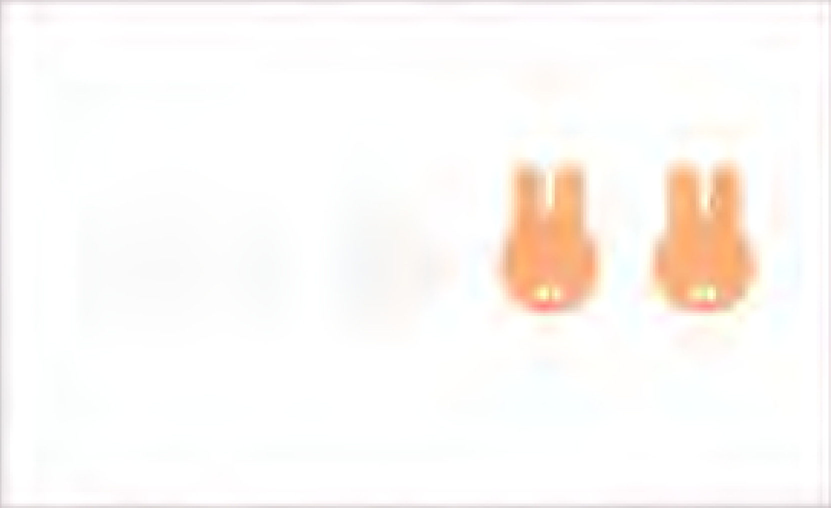
01 — First examine your logo and identify the font. I'm using a branding option that I presented to Iori Hotel back in 2007 (the client opted for an alternative solution that was created using the same method we'll cover here). These elements were made from an adaptation of Frankfurter D R01. It's always helpful to have access to all the original font shapes and not be restricted to just the letters appearing in the logo.



02 — Some quick research will bring unexpected ideas: go to Google Images and search for "tangram". We will treat the shapes of our letters in a similar way to the Chinese dissection puzzle, but with the added benefit of being able to modify the proportions of the shapes.

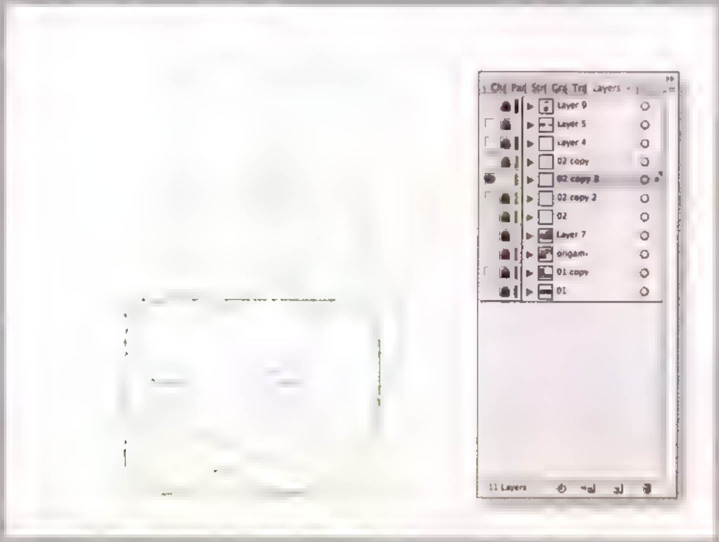


03 — We are going to make a bunny face, so search through Google Images again and look for iconic shapes for inspiration. Sometimes there will be details that you haven't thought of – it's good to have these as reference points.

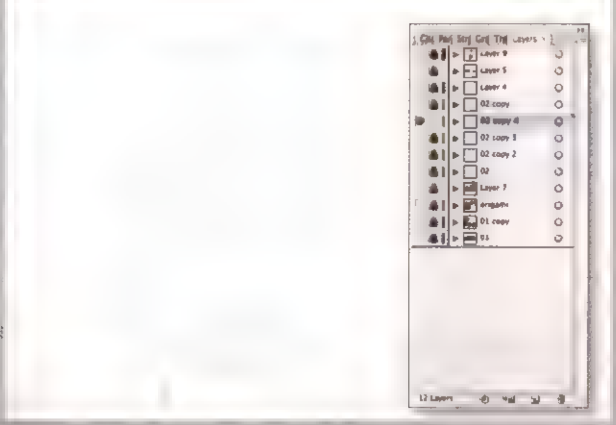


04 — For this project, I wanted to make a bunny's face without any features except teeth, in reference to the hotel's bar and restaurant. In the following steps we'll fashion the name of the hotel into a new icon – this is a preview of the complete process. →

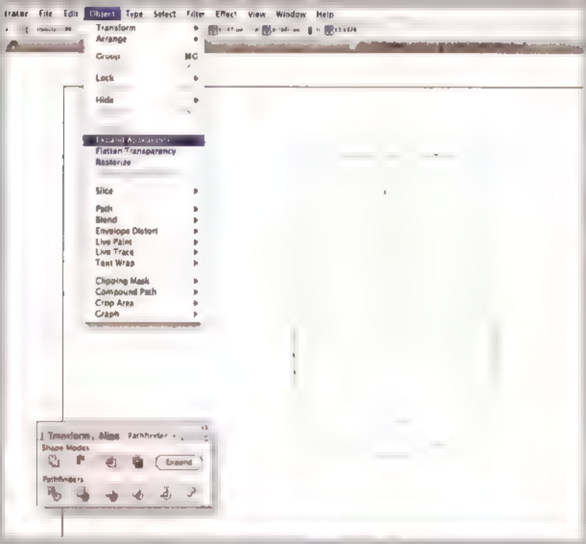
05_____Pick out some key letters in the name and look for features of the letterforms that can be used in your icon. In this case, I've picked 'R', 'O' and 'I' and I'll be using the hole in the letter 'R' to make two teeth. You can make infinite variations using different letterforms, so experiment.


Layers
Layer 9
Layer 5
Layer 4
02 copy
02 copy 3
02 copy 2
02
Layer 7
origami
01 copy
01
11 Layers

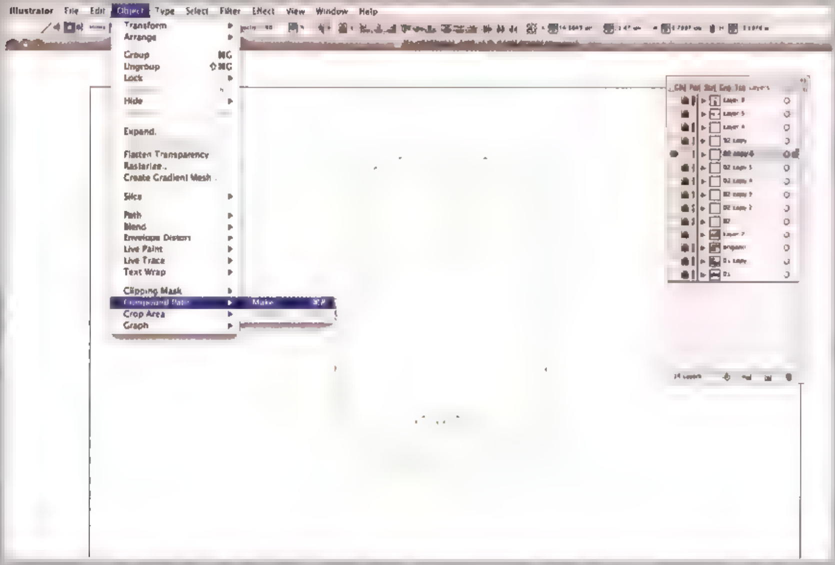
06_____Once you've positioned your letterforms into the shape that you're after, choose the Direct Selection tool, select the lines you want to remove and delete them.


Layers
Layer 9
Layer 5
Layer 4
02 copy
02 copy 4
02 copy 3
02 copy 2
02
Layer 7
origami
01 copy
01
12 Layers

07_____With the external shape of the 'R' removed, duplicate the inside shape to create the teeth. Once you're done, select and delete the inside of the letter 'O'.


Illustrator
File
Edit
Object
Type
Select
Filter
Effect
View
Window
Help
Transform
Arrange
Group
Lock
Hide
Expand Appearance
Flatten Transparency
Rasterize
Slice
Path
Blend
Envelope Distort
Live Paint
Live Trace
Text Wrap
Clipping Mask
Compound Path
Crop Area
Graph
Transform
Align
Pathfinder
Shape Modes
Expand
Pathfinders

08_____Select all the shapes making up the face outline apart from the teeth, go to the Pathfinder panel and hit Unite. Now navigate to Object> Expand Appearance.


Illustrator
File
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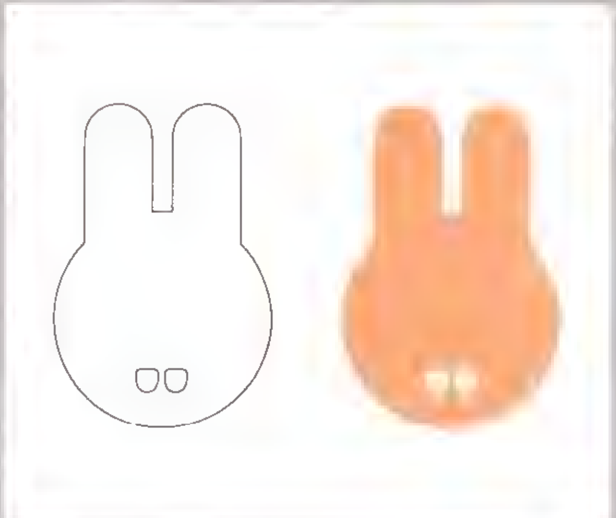
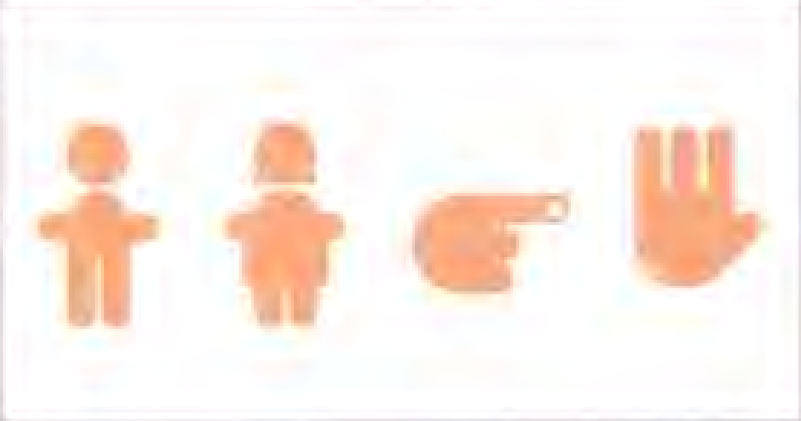
Object
Type
Select
Filter
Effect
View
Window
Help
Transform
Arrange
Group
Ungroup
Lock
Hide
Expand
Flatten Transparency
Rasterize
Create Gradient Mesh
Slice
Path
Blend
Envelope Distort
Live Paint
Live Trace
Text Wrap
Clipping Mask
Compound Path
Crop Area
Graph
Make

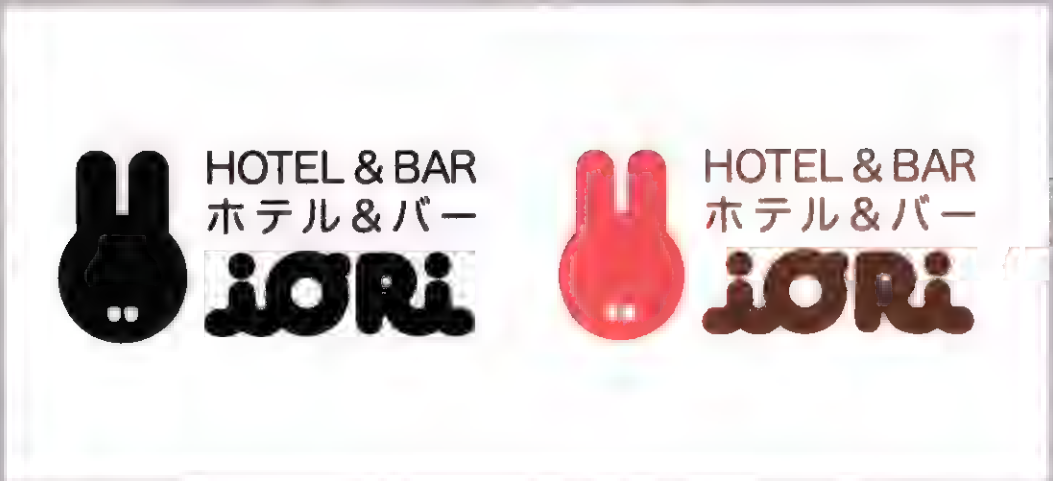
09_____We now have a blended shape and the two teeth elements, which we need to put in the same path. Select all three elements and go to Object>Compound Path>Make.



10_____At this stage, we have a unique branding element made up of different parts of the logo. This can be used as either a filled or stroke object.



11____Once you have finalised your icon, experiment with more using the same process. Here are some additional icons – toilet signs, a stop sign and a direction sign – that I designed for Iori Hotel, which is situated high in the mountains.



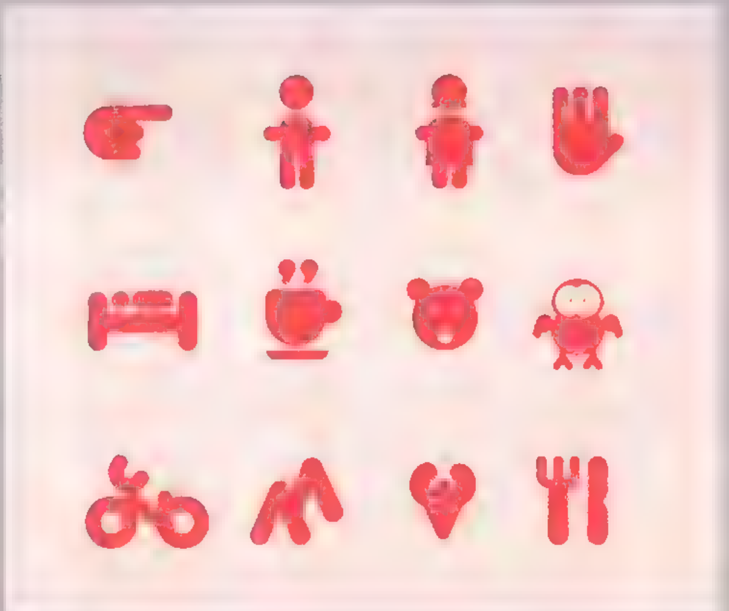
12____A good test for the success of your branding icons is how well they work when placed next to the original logo. In this case, even when the proportions of the animal's face are much bigger than the logo font, the different elements still work very well together.

FONTS

This method works better with geometric fonts, but it can be used with any kind of typography or logo – it's up to your creativity

PROPORTIONS

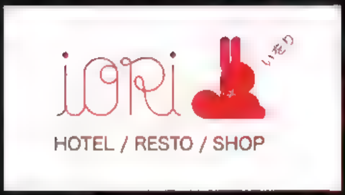
When working like this, remember to keep the proportions of the original font. In particular, try to keep both the stroke weight and the radius of the round corners – it's as though you are growing a font family



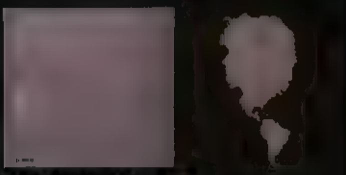
13____The last step is to put together the icon set with the logo. Now you have a complete branding family comprising lots of different elements.

Tea Time Studio

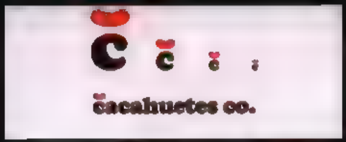
Sebastián Litmanovich shares five of his favourite projects



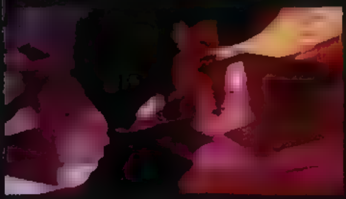
Iori Hotel – September 2007
Tea Time Studio created the branding for the Iori Hotel in Spain



ESL Music – May 2008
ESL Music commissioned Tea Time Studio to design the logo and album jacket for Argentine singer-songwriter Federico Aubele's single 'La Esquina Corazon' from the album *Panamericana*


cacahuetes co.

Cacahuetes – August 2004
Spanish audiovisual company Cacahuetes briefed Tea Time Studio to produce its branding and identity work



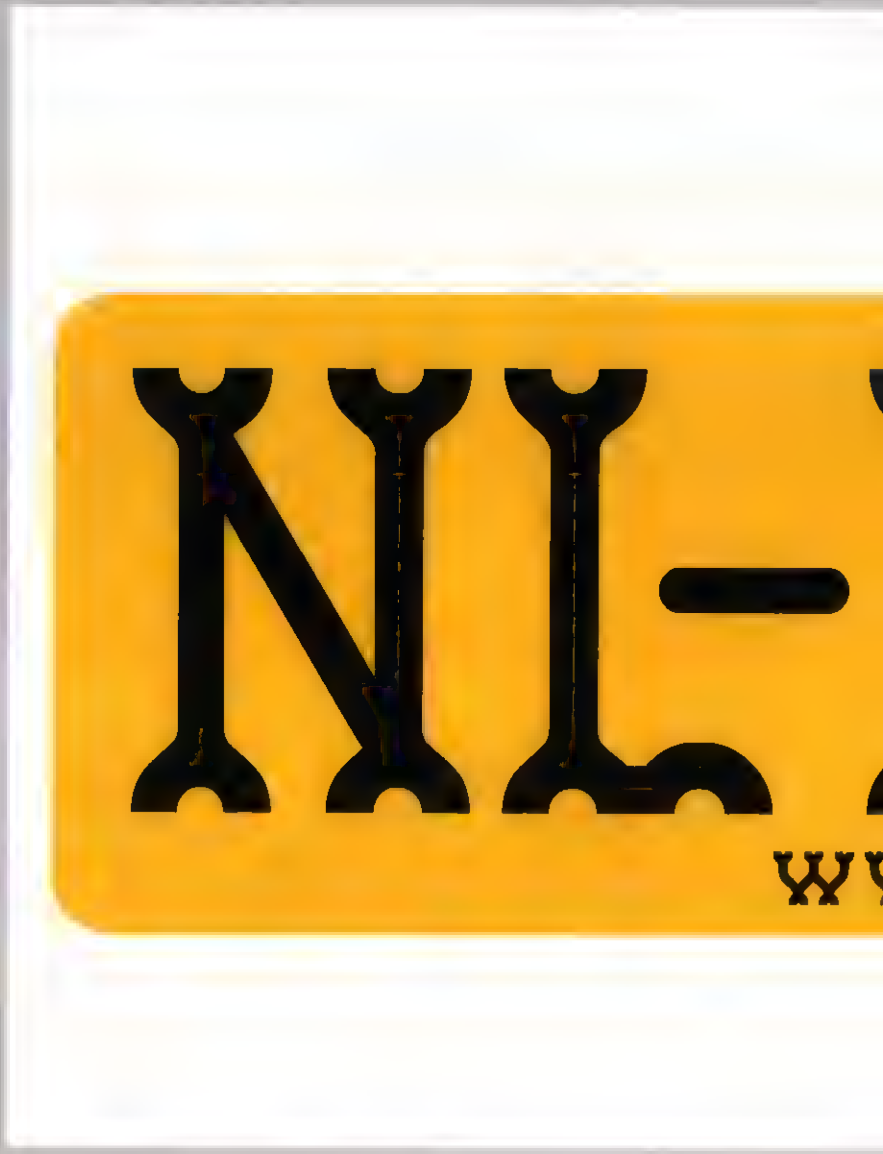
ESL Music – February 2011
Tea Time Studio was responsible for the script and art-direction of the music video for Federico Aubele's song 'No One'

Ana Montiel – January 2012
The studio also directed the video documentary *On a Journey From Here to Here: an Introduction to the Life and Work of Ana Montiel*

Illustrator CS3 or later

Construct a type-based identity

Ruben Pater from Lava explains how designing a custom typeface can work for an identity



In 2010, the Ruhr area of Germany was named European Capital of Culture, and Lava was asked to design an identity for all cultural activities in the Netherlands. The principal idea was to organise all the activities as a travelling cultural festival, which would encompass everything from fine arts, to music and theatre. The identity needed to be strong and simple so that all the cultural activities could adopt its style without copyright issues.

Having few funds for media attention, even the simplest signifier needed to be recognisable as the festival style. In this tutorial, I'll show you how we designed the logo, which became the starting point for the identity.

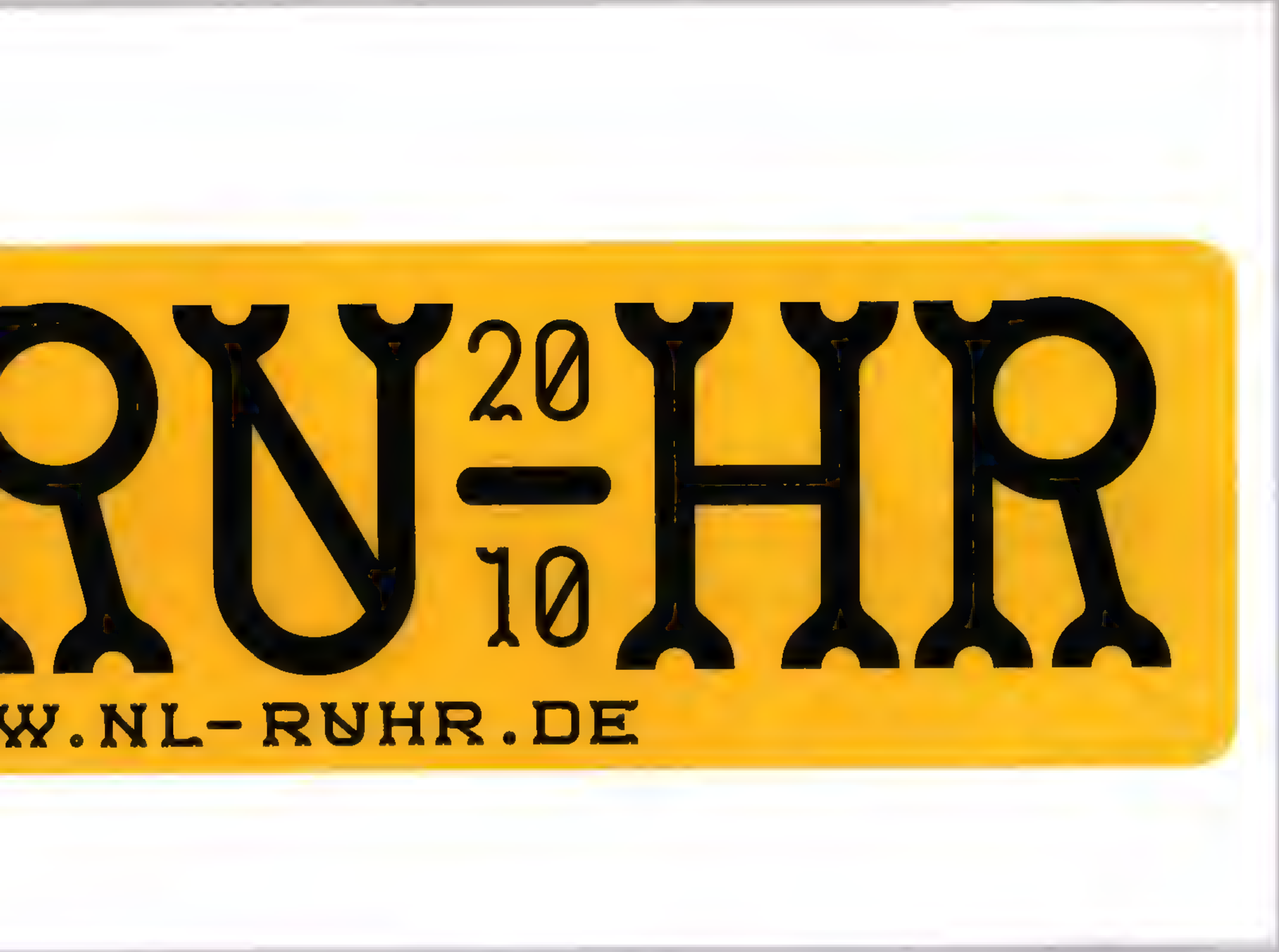
Ruben Pater
— Ruben works at Lava, a design studio in Amsterdam that specialises in editorial and identity design. In 2010 the studio was awarded 'European design agency of the year'. Recently Lava designed the identity for the new Moscow Design Museum. www.lava.nl

Time needed
2-3 hours

Assets
You'll find the full size screengrabs for each step of this project at www.computerarts.co.uk/illustratoressentials

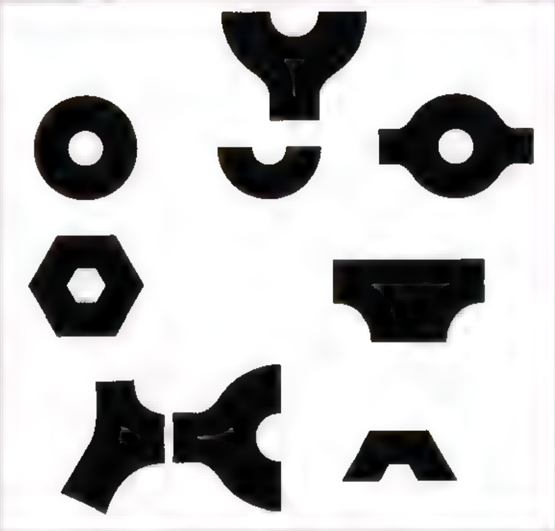
Skills
- Design a custom typeface
- Create a cohesive brand identity

01— We started by coming up with the name and the concept for the identity. Before you start designing, working with the right name and concept is essential. In this case, we were able to come up with both the name and the concept, which is an ideal scenario. The client wanted a short and descriptive name. Since the Dutch are known to travel through the area with caravans on their way to their vacations, we wanted to use the Dutch licence plate as an ironic reference. From the descriptive name NL-Ruhr we came up with NL-RU-HR to use as the writing system on the licence plates: something that was both simple and immediately recognisable.

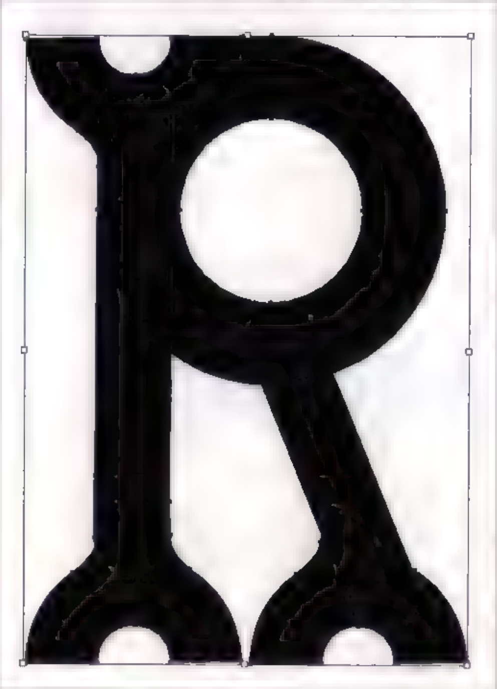


Zollverein

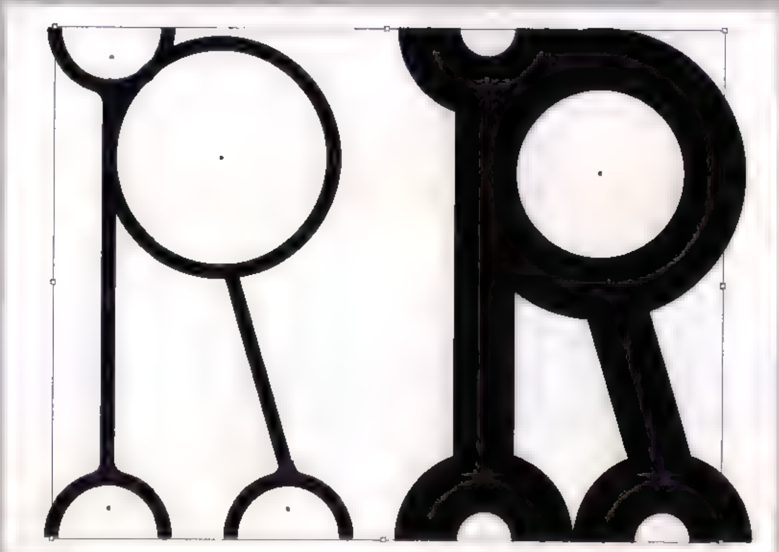
02____ The licence plate in itself was only a reference to the Netherlands, so we needed to change the typeface to something related to the Ruhr area of Germany. The Ruhr is known for its industrial heritage, boasting many old factory buildings and mines, and these industrial parks play a key role in the area's identity to this day.



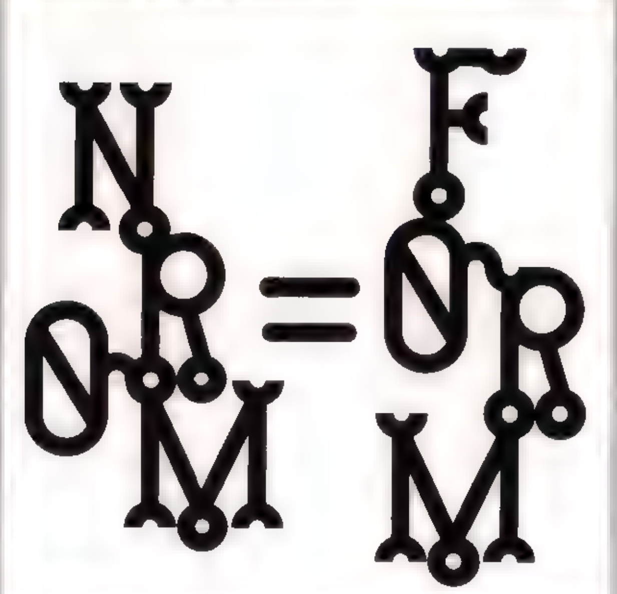
03____ The factories from that time have distinctive forms, such as their towers, their steel construction and their large pulleys. From these forms we traced graphic elements that we could use to build the typeface.



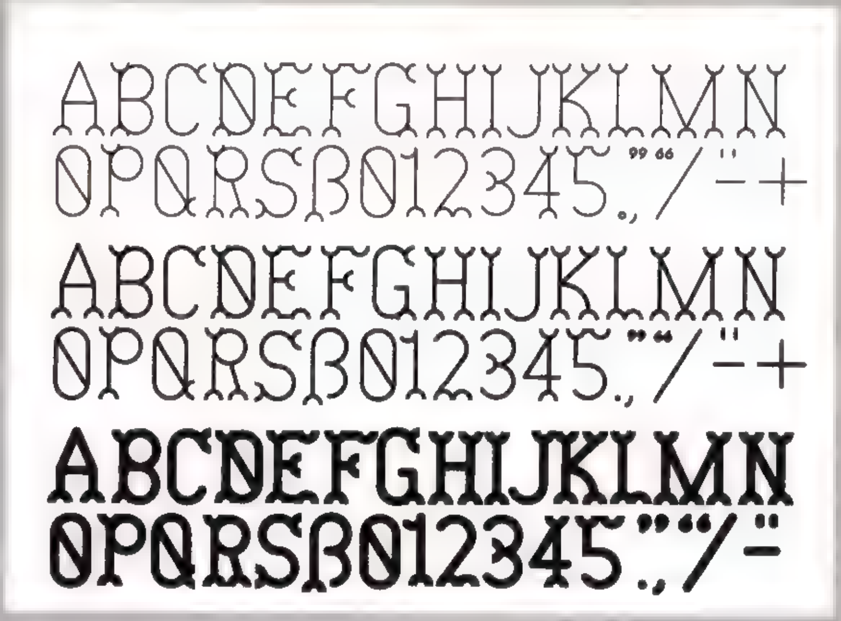
04____Because the letter 'R' was in the logo and used a round shape as well as a diagonal, it was a good letter to start the typeface off with. From our previous sketches we constructed the first letter to get an idea of the feel of the type. At this stage, it was still a rough idea, but it gave us the basis for something we could develop further in time.



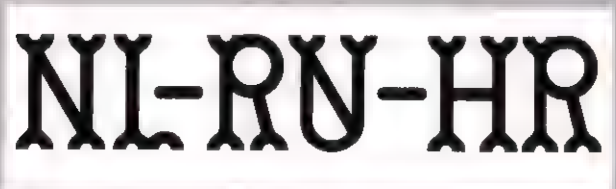
05____To find a proper weight, we redrew the 'R' in strokes, enabling us to look at its different weights. Details like the rounding of the joints had to be drawn as a solid instead of a stroke. For your own work, try different stroke sizes and print out the results as small as 10pt – they will look very different to how they do on screen.



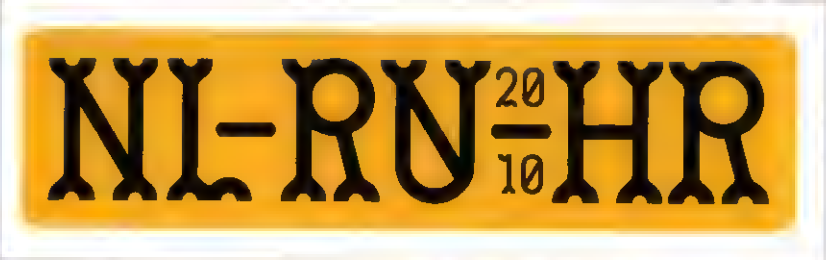
06____As we played around with the various font elements, we looked for ways to construct the typeface and create a common logic. With the chain elements as serifs, we started connecting the letters at a later stage – something that echoed the festival's travelling activities – just like a route.



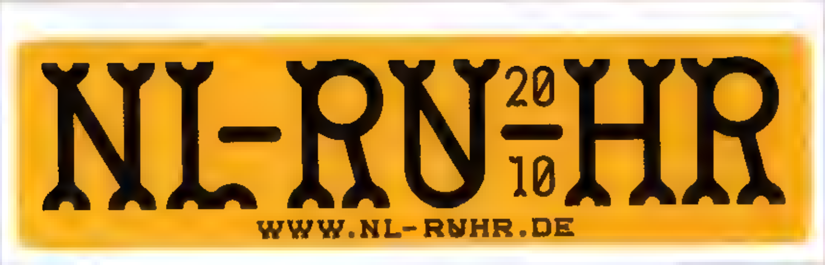
07____Using the building blocks as our starting point, we created a first draft of the typeface. In this case, the curly serifs made the font look less technical and somewhat romantic, while the strong diagonals added a technical feel. It's always a good idea to have a few quirky details like this in the design of a typeface – without being too radical – otherwise the end result could end up being indistinct.



08____Once we'd set the logotype using the letters, the spacing and balance had to be adjusted for use as a logo. This was the time to refine and carefully construct its elements. We made the letters narrower and redrew them to get rid of vector clutter. This process was repeated for the full typeface.



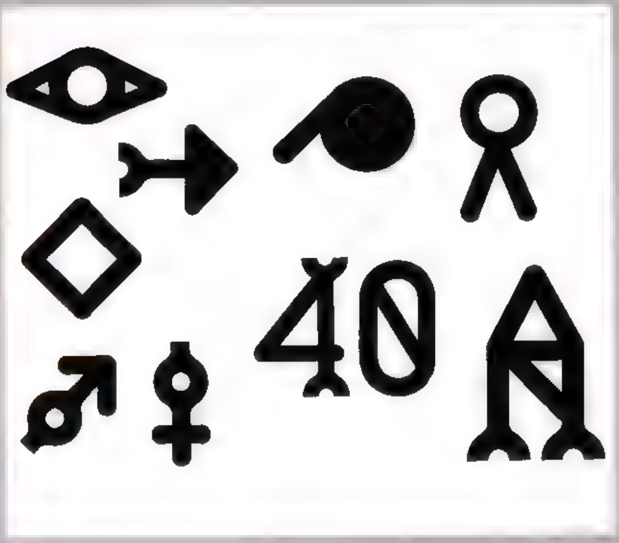
09____By adding a yellow background to the typeface, the licence plate look was complete. We also added the festival year in a subtle licence-plate style.


NL-RU 20 10 HR
WWW.NL-RUHR.DE

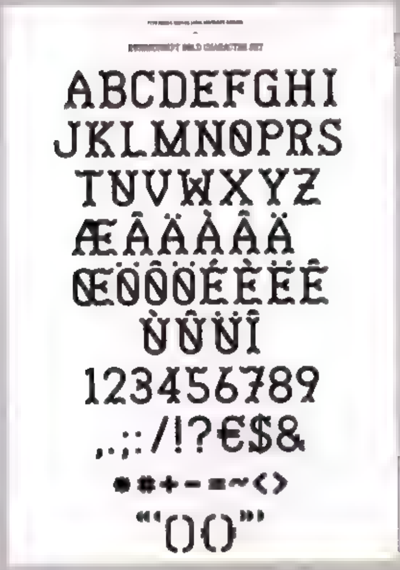
10____ Our client also asked if we could make a version of the identity for the web address. Based on the characteristics we designed, we created new letters that were similar in style but wider and open enough to be legible at small screen and print sizes.

THE RIGHT APPROACH

When the type only applies to a logotype and a few headings, it's best to typeset words manually in Illustrator and import them into InDesign. When the client wants to use the typeface or you need to typeset longer sections, it's worth using a program like FontLab Studio to create a working font. This will take more time, so be sure the client is prepared to make the investment.



11____ Based on the typeface, we then created icons that could be used for way-finding and maps in much the same way that the letters of the typeface were constructed.


ABCDEFGHI
JKLMNOPRS
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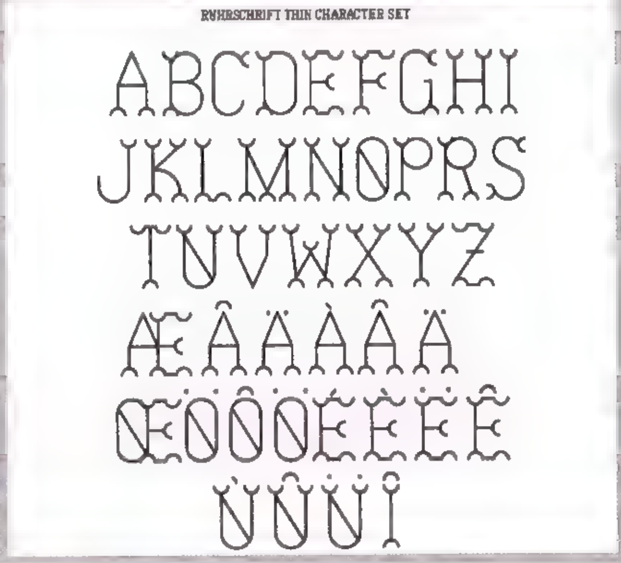
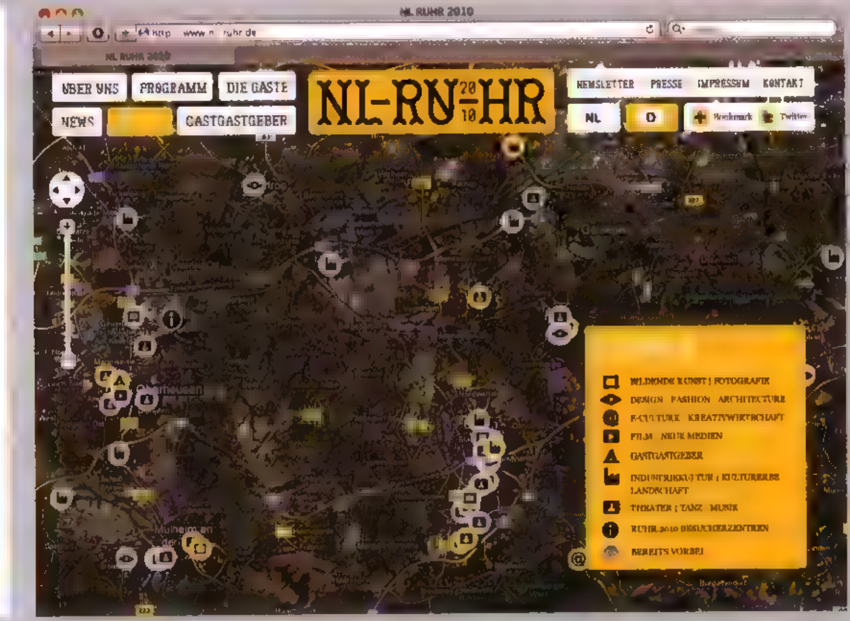
ÆÂÄÀÂÄ
ŒÖÔÖÉÈÉÊ
ÜÛÜÎ
123456789
.,;:/!?€$&
*#+-=~‹›
"'()'"

12____ For the implementation of the full identity, it was important to create the full letterset – we used FontLab Studio – so all the parties involved in the project could use the typeface. Creating a font from scratch is time-consuming work, and requires extensive knowledge of the software, so we worked with type designer Lisa Fleck to create the typeface as a font.


RUHRSCHRIFT THIN CHARACTER SET
ABCDEFGHI
JKLMNOPRS
TUVWXYZ
ÆÂÄÀÂÄ
ŒÖÔÖÉÈÉÊ
ÜÛÜÎ

13____ Besides having a bold version of our Ruhrschrift font, we also created a thin version as a contrast. Both consisted of only capital letters, because we only needed to use the font for headings and display purposes. This also reduced the design time, since a font that includes both lowercase and capitals can be very time-consuming to produce.

NL-
RU-
HR 2010


NL RUHR 2010
ÜBER UNS
PROGRAMM
DIE GÄSTE
NEWS
GASTGASTGEBER
NL-RU 20 10 HR
NEWSLETTER
PRESSE
IMPRESSUM
KONTAKT
NL
D
Bookmark
Twitter
BILDENDE KUNST | FOTOGRAFIE
DESIGN FASHION ARCHITECTURE
E-CULTURE KREATIVWIRTSCHAFT
FILM NEUE MEDIEN
GASTGASTGEBER
INDUSTRIEKULTUR | KULTURERBE LANDSCHAFT
THEATER | TANZ MUSIK
RUHR.2010 BESUCHERZENTREN
BEREITS VORBEI

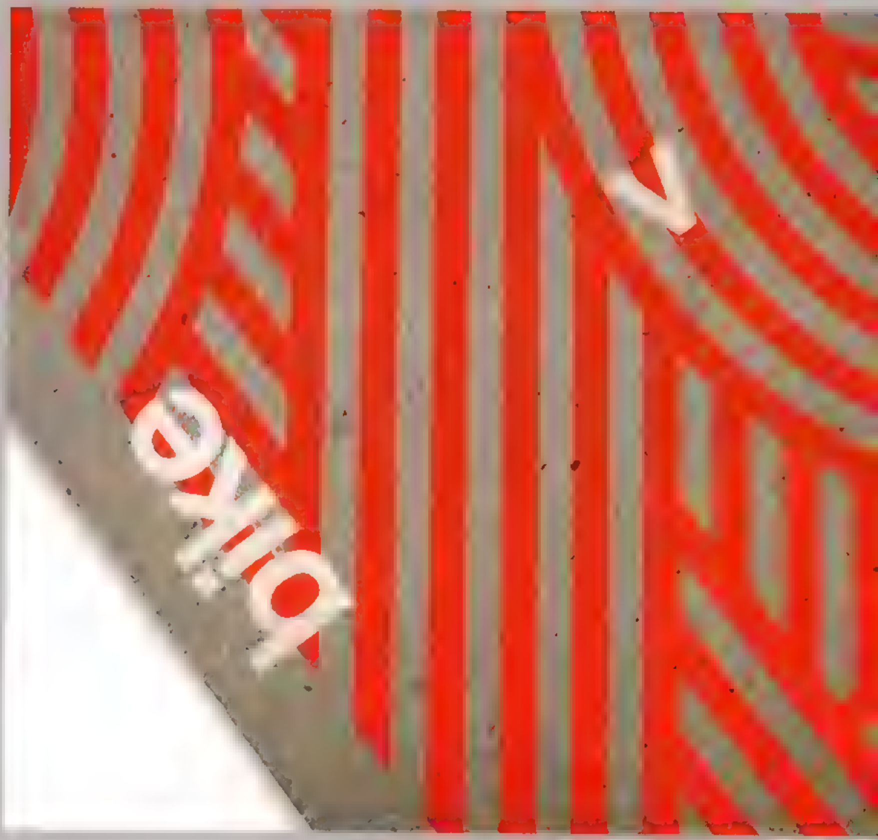
14____ Here are two examples of the finished work: a website with the festival programme and icons implemented in a Google Maps calendar; and a catalogue design. Both are instantly recognisable thanks to the colour palette and, of course, the custom font.

FEATURES
QUICK SKILLS
TUTORIALS

Illustrator CS4 or later

Create a modular grid system in Illustrator

Mark Bloom walks through how to create a flexible modular grid system that will change the way you approach design



Made famous by Swiss graphic designers such as Josef Müller-Brockmann and Wim Crouwel as far back as the 1920s and 30s, the use of a grid system can be hugely beneficial to all creatives, especially designers and illustrators. Grids can act as an aid to achieve ordered structure within your design. In this tutorial I'll talk you through my personal approach to applying a modular grid system within Illustrator, working with simple geometric elements in a poster design.

Although the grid created in this tutorial is intended for use in print, similar grid systems are equally beneficial in web design, particularly when laying out text and images. Designing to a grid will not only strengthen your typography skills but will change the way you approach design.

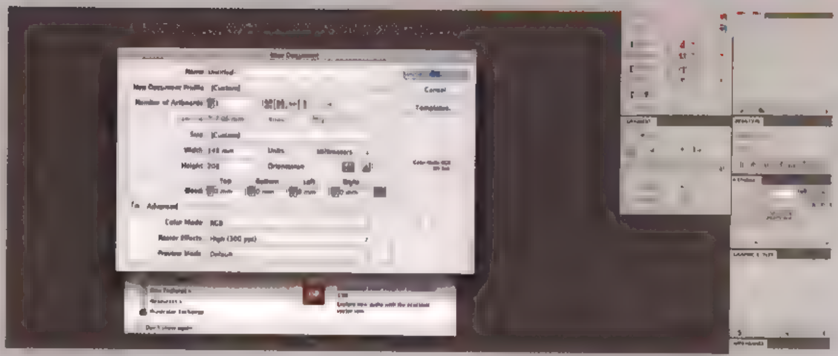
Mark Bloom
— Founder of Essex-based graphic design studio Mash Creative, Mark Bloom is also the author of the book *14 Years, 41 Logos* and the creator of the State of the Obvious range of merchandise www.mashcreative.co.uk

Time needed
5 mins (grid only)

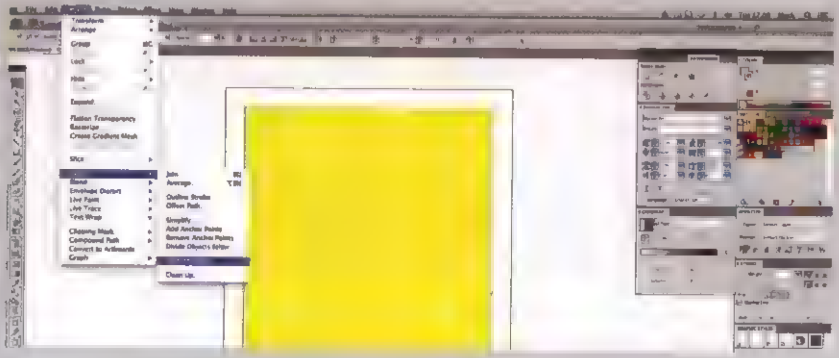
Assets
You'll find the full size screengrabs for each step of this project at www.computerarts.co.uk/illustratoressentials

Skills

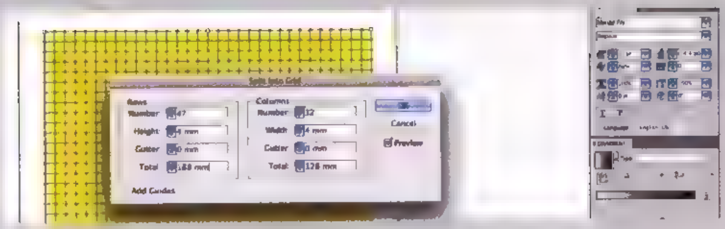
- Structure type and illustration more efficiently
- Create a modular grid system in Illustrator



01 ___ In Illustrator, set up a document for a flyer. In this example, I'm creating a slightly shorter A5 document measuring 148x208mm (normally 210mm). Now decide on your margins – I'm going with 10mm as this should give plenty of 'safe space' between the borders and the artwork.



02 ___ To create your grid, first draw a rectangle measuring 128x188mm. To calculate how big this rectangle needed to be, I subtracted the margins (10mm each side) from my page size. So in this case: 148 minus 10 (left margin), minus 10 (right margin) equals 128mm. Place this rectangle in the centre of your page (Align To Artboard>Horizontal Align Centre>Vertical Align Centre).

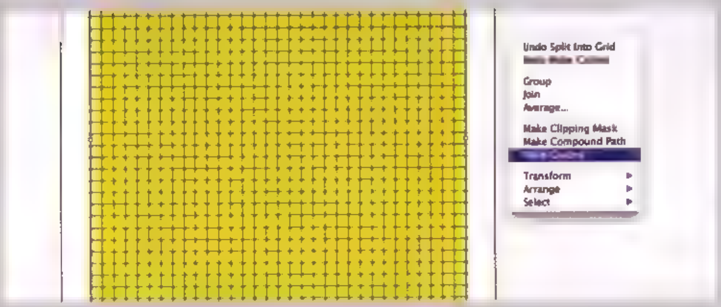


Rows
Number 47
Height 4 mm
Gutter 0 mm
Total 188 mm

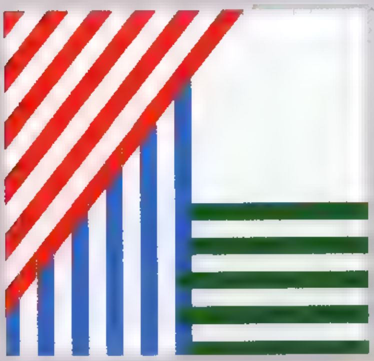
Columns
Number 12
Width 4 mm
Gutter 0 mm
Total 128 mm

☑ Preview

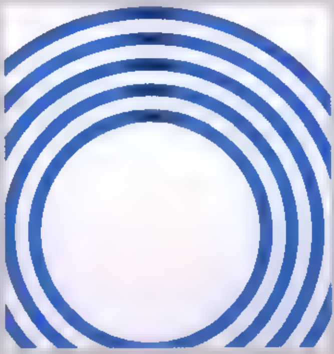
03___ With the rectangle selected, go to Object>Path>Split Into Grid. I want modules that measure 4mm², so to work out the number of rows take the height (188mm) and divide it by four. This gives 47, so input this in the Rows>Number field, and change the height to 4mm, gutter to 0 and total value to 188. For the columns, take the width (128mm) and divide it by 4. This gives 32, so enter that in the Columns>Number field. Change the width to 4mm, gutter to 0 and total to 128. Tick Preview to see the divisions.



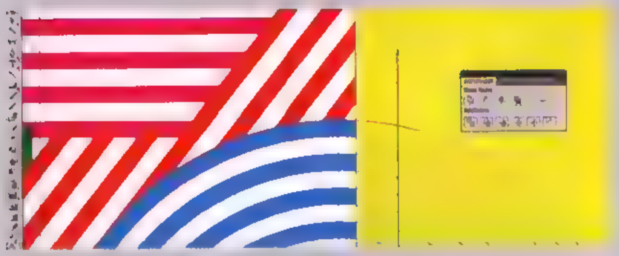
04___ Once you click OK, you'll have a rectangle that has been divided into 4mm squares. To turn this into guides, select the squares (Cmd/Ctrl+A). Then Cmd/Ctrl+click, select Make Guides and this will transform your grid into guides. Now you have a flexible modular grid to align your design to.



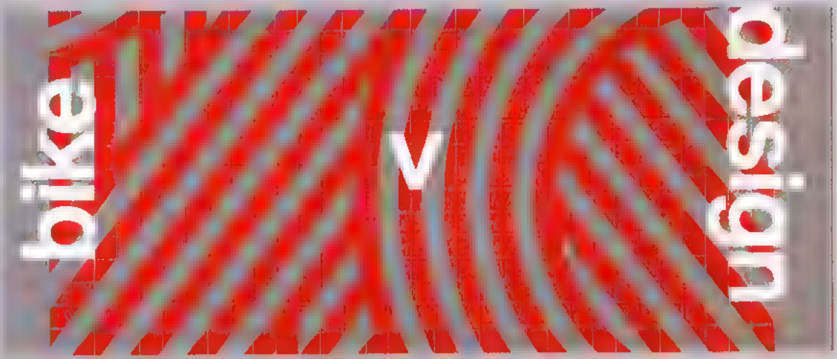
05___ Now that your grid system is in place, start mocking up a rough layout using 4mm rectangles. This flyer design is inspired by the same lines and angles used in the BVD logo (Bike v Design). Using smart guides (Cmd/Ctrl+U), drag each rectangle into place ensuring they all sit within the 4mm grid. Guidelines can be distracting, so it might help to turn them on and off throughout this process (Cmd/Ctrl+;).



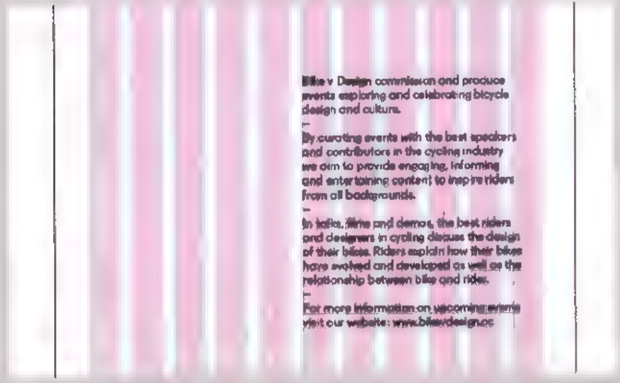
06___ To break up the design and continue with the BVD logo theme, I want to add circles to my pattern. To ensure that these sit within my grid, I drew my first circle to a size of 140mm with a 4mm stroke weight. My second circle is drawn at 124mm, also with a 4mm stroke weight, which means there is now a proportionate empty space between the two circles. I continued to do this until I had five concentric circles that I then centred to each other.



07___ Once you're happy with your design, check it against the grid to ensure that everything lines up correctly. Convert all stroke lines (such as the circles) to outlines (Object>Expand>Fill and Stroke). If you have any overlapping lines or circles, trim them to fit to my grid. This is done by placing an object such as a rectangle on top of the object you wish to trim, selecting both objects, and selecting Minus Front from the Pathfinder.



08___ To finish off the flyer front, I've added a grey background that contrasts nicely with the orange pattern. I then ran text vertically on either side of the pattern and ensured that it all sits to the same baseline as the grid.



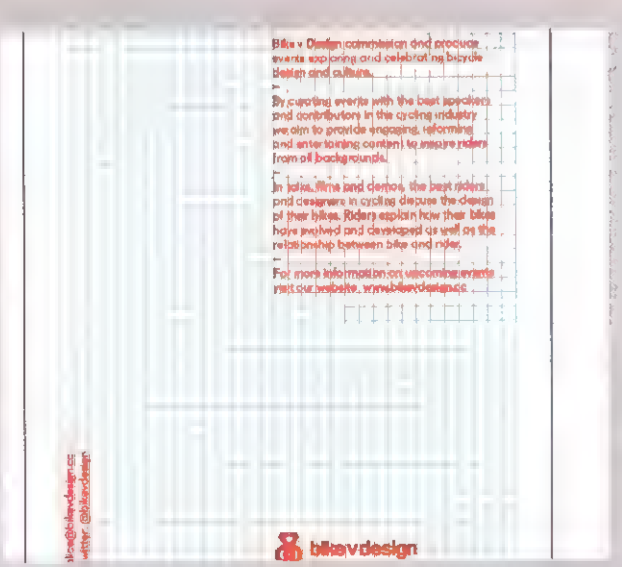
Bike v Design commission and produce events exploring and celebrating bicycle design and culture.

By curating events with the best speakers and contributors in the cycling industry we aim to provide engaging, informing and entertaining content to inspire riders from all backgrounds.

In talks, films and demos, the best riders and designers in cycling discuss the design of their bikes. Riders explain how their bikes have evolved and developed as well as the relationship between bike and rider.

For more information on upcoming events visit our website: www.bikevdesign.cc

09___ Now for the back. When laying out type, I find it useful to use a column grid rather than modular grid system. In this case the grid allows for 11 columns with a 4mm gutter (shown in pink). I aligned the paragraph of text to a column and checked that my leading allows all text to sit on the same baseline grid.



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For more information on upcoming events visit our website: www.bikevdesign.cc

10___ Continue to add the last few pieces of text to the back of your flyer. Finally, check the alignment of individual elements to your grid to ensure that everything is perfectly aligned.

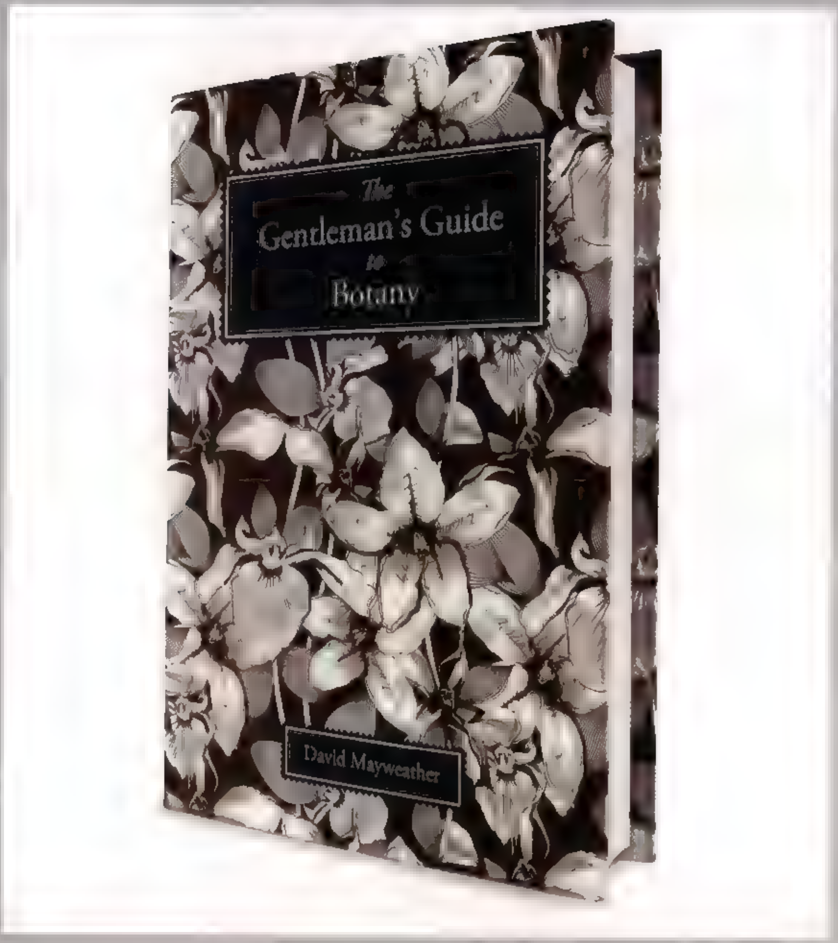
Illustrator CS6 or later

Create a versatile repeat pattern

With Illustrator CS6's intuitive new Pattern Creation mode, **Steven Bonner** reveals how to create an engaging book cover illustration

Of all the changes Adobe made to Illustrator for the CS6 release, the one that interests me the most is its Pattern Creation mode. Repeating patterns can be a difficult thing to get right and every creative has their own method for doing it. But now Illustrator's new feature enables you to quickly and easily make and edit patterns, giving you instant control when dealing with complicated compositions.

For this tutorial, we'll draw some simple flowers and arrange them into a pattern that can be used on a huge range of applications – in this case, a hardback book jacket.



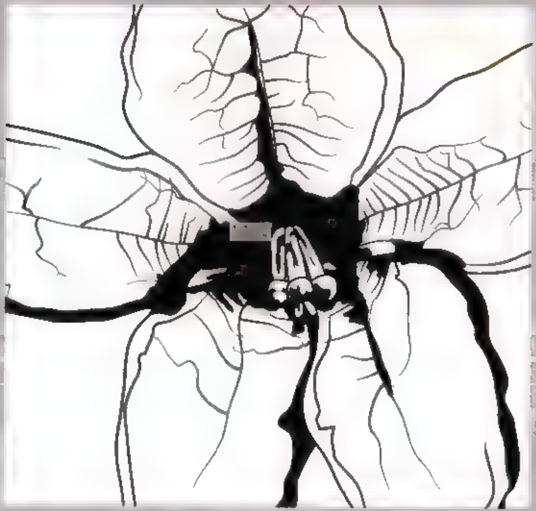
Steven Bonner
— Stirling-based Steven is a multi-disciplined designer and illustrator working for clients such as Nike, Penguin, *The New York Times* and Audi. His love of type is evident throughout his work. www.stevenbonner.com

Assets
You'll find the full size screengrabs for each step of this project at www.computerarts.co.uk/illustratoressentials

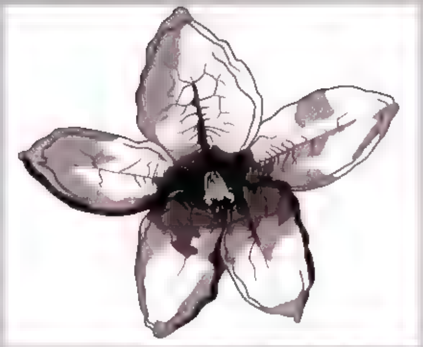
Time needed
4-5 hours

Skills
- Understand the Pattern Options panel
- Add patterns to the Swatches panel

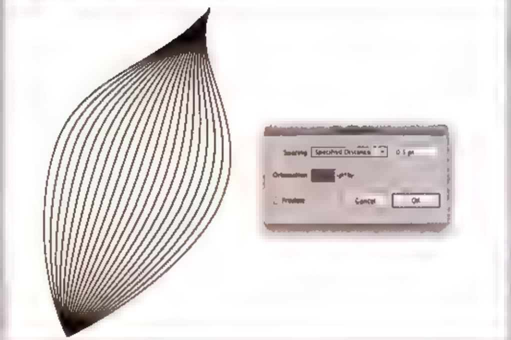
01 — First of all, go online and search for some flowers to draw. We're looking for interesting or unusual shapes and a nice variation in contrast that we can use for the tonal colouring in the illustration.



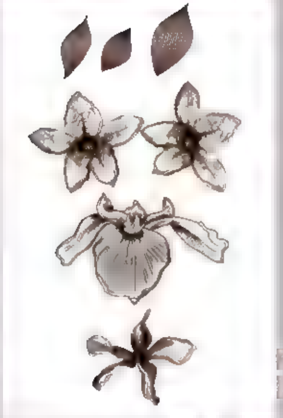
02 — Next, using your chosen images as reference, start to draw the flowers in Illustrator using the Pen tool, brushes or the Pencil tool, depending on your personal preference. I'm using a graphics tablet so I prefer to use the Pencil tool because it's more freeflowing and quicker than the Pen tool. The lines don't have to be too perfect, so an element of roughness is good for the final outcome. Once you have your lines, use a mixture of the width profiles in the Stroke panel for a more natural look on your paths.



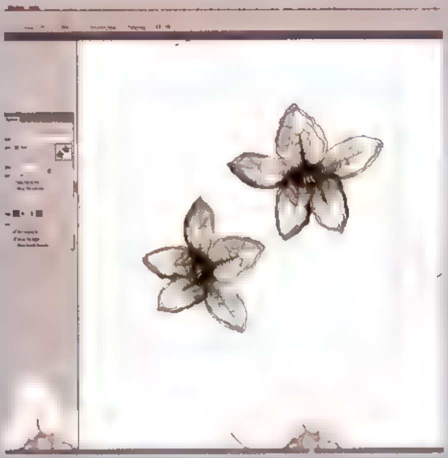
03 Working in shades of grey for the moment, block in areas of colour. Use a darker shade for the darkest areas then work up to the lightest areas until it resembles the image on the left. Again, it doesn't need to be too perfect as a rougher, more hand-drawn look is what we're after here.



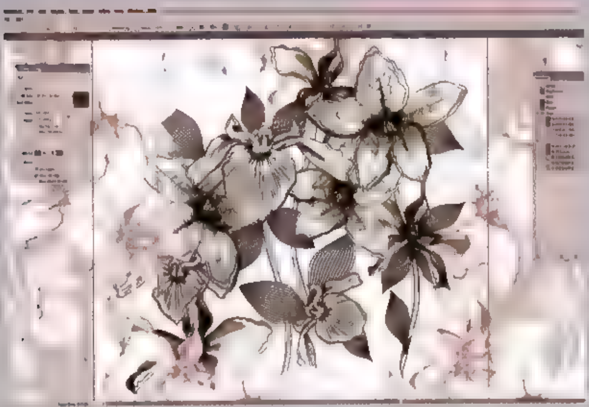
04 Now, using the Pen tool, draw the two edges of a leaf shapes, and blend the paths together using the Blend tool (Ctrl/Cmd+Opt/Alt+B). Adjust the steps until you're happy with the look. Once you have one leaf, copy it and use the Pathfinder to create a solid shape behind the blend lines.



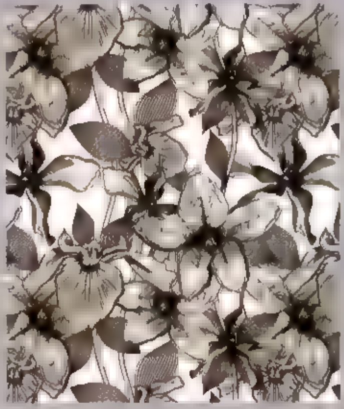
05 Carry on and draw more flowers and leaves, then colour them using a colour scheme of your choice. I've gone for a muted palette using subtle greens and browns, but you might want to change the mood of your piece by using a fresher, more vibrant colour scheme.



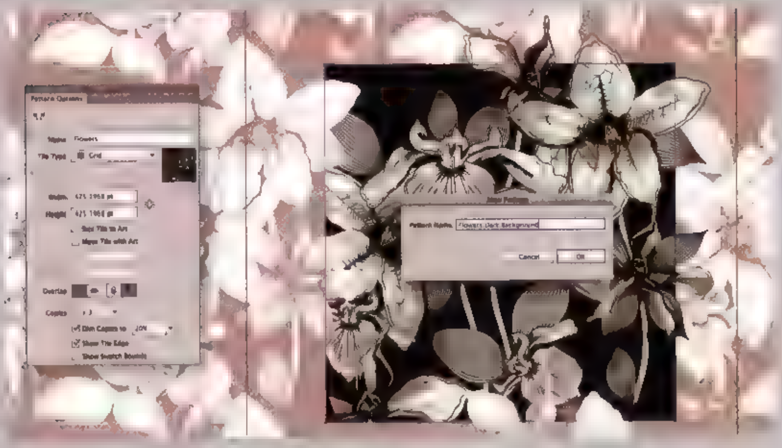
06 Now for the fun part. Copy your elements and go to Object>Pattern>Make. The Pattern Options panel will appear: paste in your elements and name your pattern 'Flowers'. You now have several options that help you while working in Pattern Creation mode, such as Tile Type (leave on Grid for now), a sizing option for your tiles, spacing options (for use if you choose to crop the tile to your art size), overlap options (whether you want the tile to overlap at the top, bottom, left, or right) and copy options to help you visualise the pattern as you work. I've set the tile width and height to 425pt, unchecked 'Size Tile to Art', and set the copies to 3x3, dimming them to 20%, but retaining the option to see the tile edge so I can see what's going on. This works for me, but you might want your own preferences.



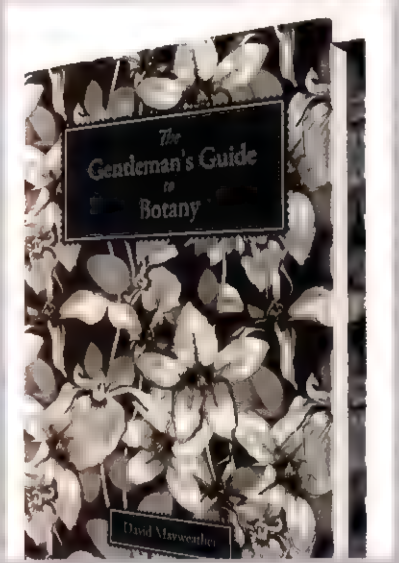
07 Carry on arranging your flowers and building up your composition. At this point, because you can still use the rest of Illustrator's tools within the Pattern Creation mode, you can make each flower appear unique so that they don't look too uniform. You can draw some stems and detail for each flower, and experiment with the front-to-back arrangement in order to achieve the best visual.



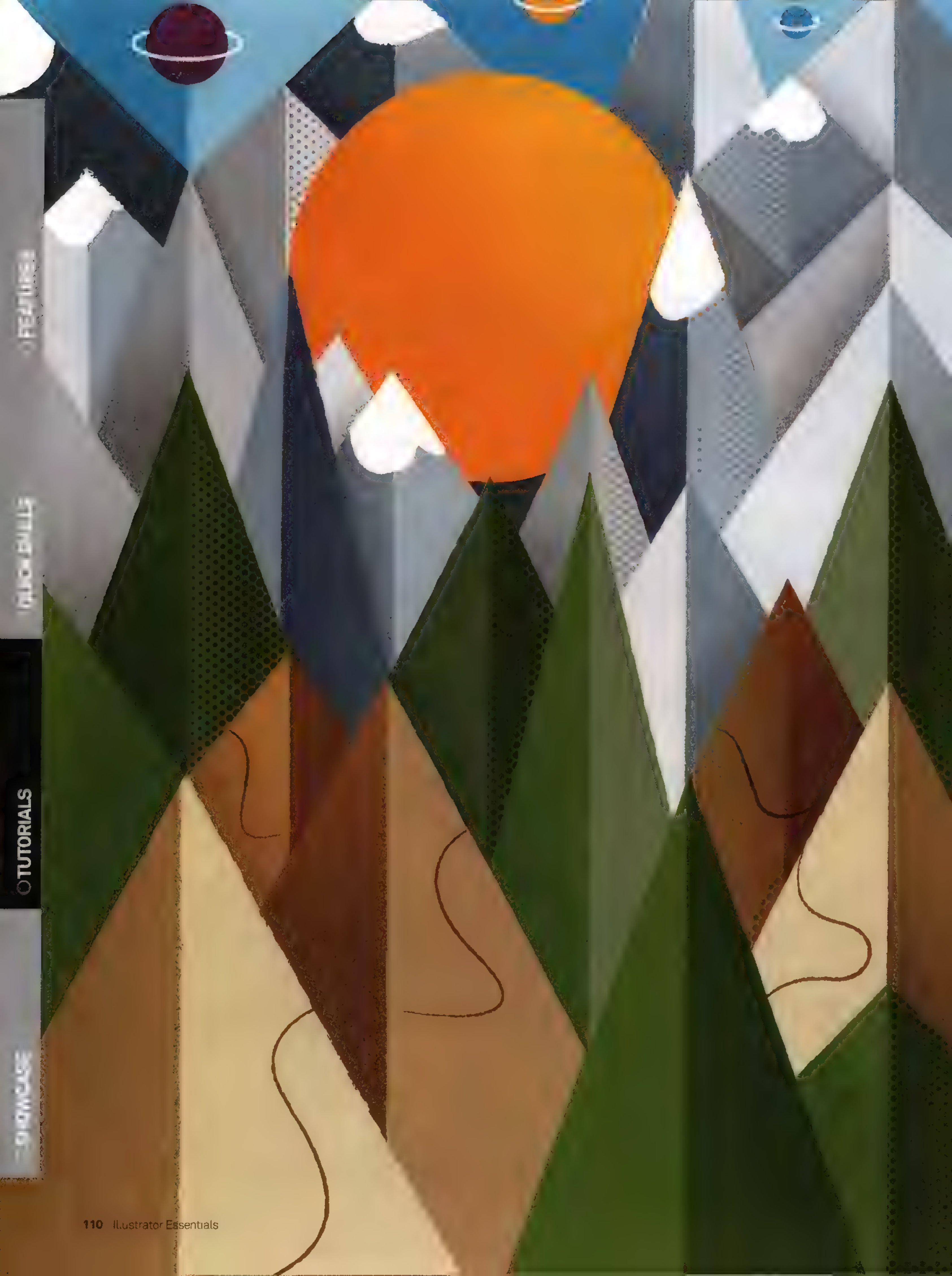
08 Once you're happy with the pattern as a tile, hit Ctrl/Cmd+S to save and take you back to your main artboard. Draw a shape and fill it with your pattern to test how it looks at full strength. Try using different sizes of box to see how the repeat works over bigger areas.



09 Next, make a few variations of the pattern by going back into your tile, adding a coloured background and choosing 'Save a Copy'. This will retain your original pattern and add a new version, giving you more options when applying it to various items.



10 And there you have it: you now have a fully repeating pattern saved to your Swatches panel that you can use on whatever you like. You can also edit the pattern on the fly and make small adjustments to it very easily, without having to start all over again. Go back and play with the hex and brick-tiling options to create offset patterns with even more variation and interest.



Illustrator CS5 or later

Add depth and texture

Jeffrey Bowman
explains how to use grids, gradients and textures to add depth to your illustrations

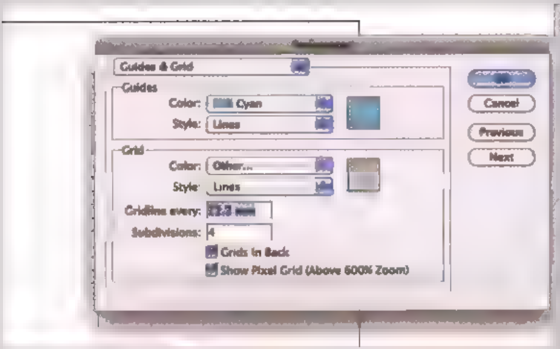
Adding extra depth to an image can be a quick process that utilises some simple tools offered by Illustrator. Using the Grain effect you can add a retro texture, which, combined with some halftone patterns and simple brush strokes, can turn a flat-looking illustration into a rich texturised design. Over the following steps, I'll show you how.

Jeffrey Bowman
— UK-based Jeffrey Bowman is a multi-practicing designer, illustrator and lecturer who explores all visual platforms and cultures. His work is underpinned by fun. www.jeffrey-bowman.co.uk

Time needed
2 hours

Assets
You'll find the full size screengrabs for each step of this project at www.computerarts.co.uk/illustratoressentials

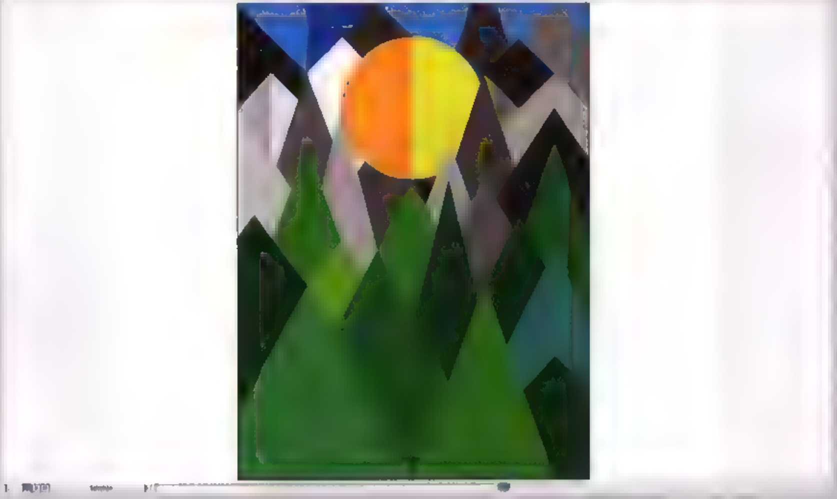
Skills
- Add depth with the Grain effect
- Create halftone patterns
- Set up a grid in Illustrator



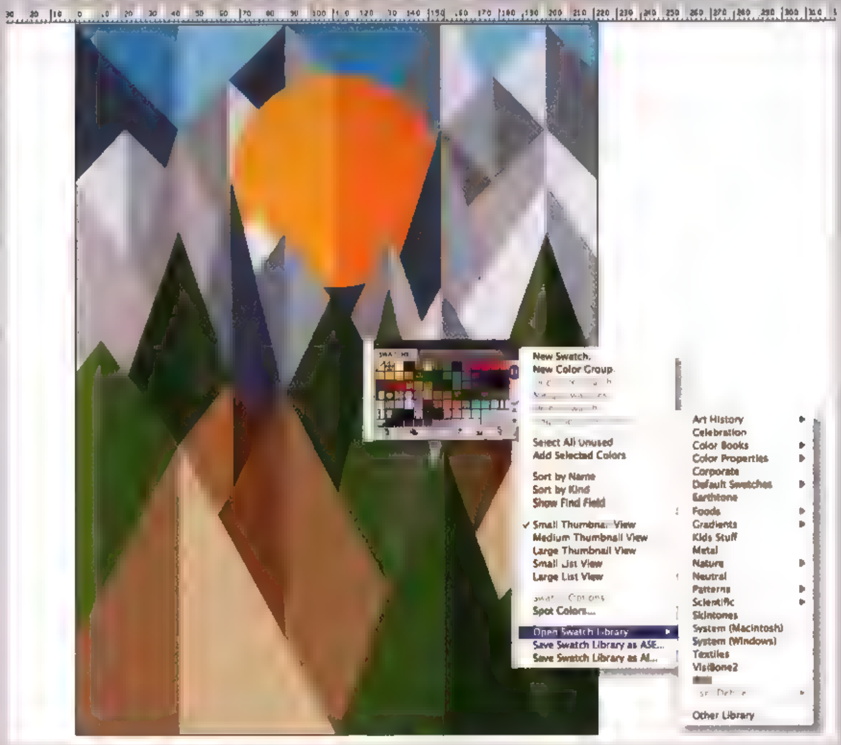
Guides & Grid
Guides
Color: Cyan
Style: Lines
Grid
Color: Other...
Style: Lines
Gridline every: 22.3 mm
Subdivisions: 4
☑ Grids in Back
☑ Show Pixel Grid (Above 600% Zoom)

OK
Cancel
Previous
Next

01 — Setting up a grid is the first thing to do. Work out the width of your document and divide it by the amount of segments you want, then navigate to Preferences>Guides and Grids, and insert the figure into the Gridline Every field. It's entirely up to you how many sub-divisions you want.



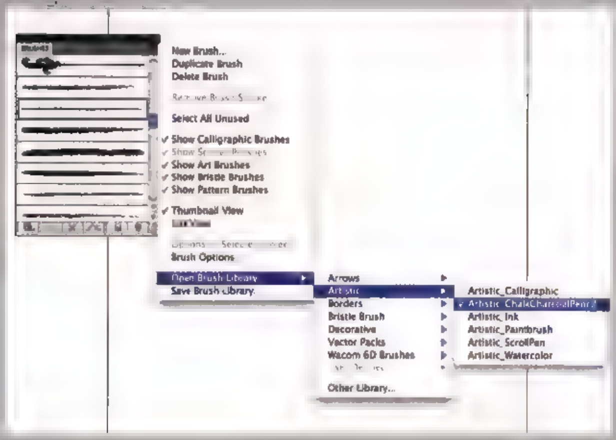
02 — Now that you have your grid, rough out your illustration, ensuring you select 'Snap to Document Grid' (View>Grids & Guides). I've created a mountain scene with the sun as the focal point. I turned my rulers on (Cmd/Ctrl+R) to find the centre of my canvas.



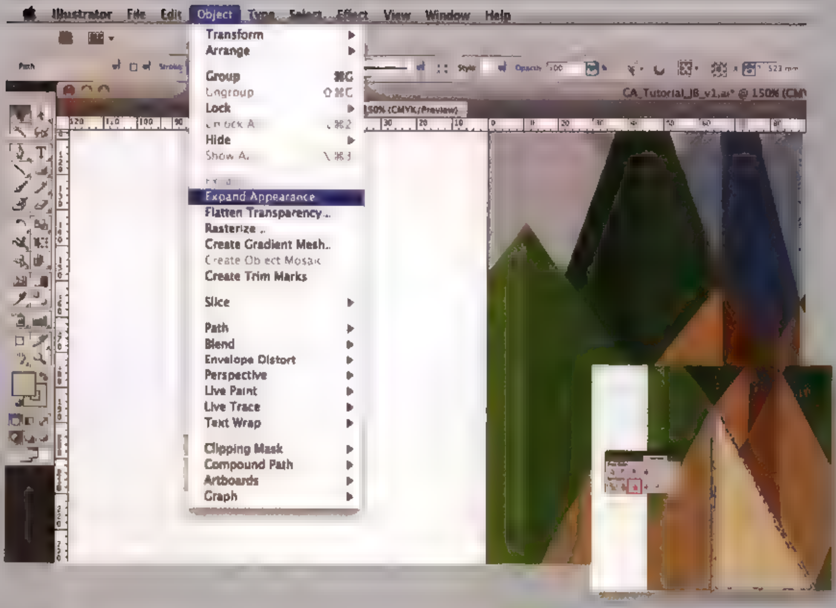
New Swatch...
New Color Group...
Select All Unused
Add Selected Colors
Sort by Name
Sort by Kind
Show Find Field
✓ Small Thumbnail View
Medium Thumbnail View
Large Thumbnail View
Small List View
Large List View
Spot Colors...
Open Swatch Library
Save Swatch Library as ASE...
Save Swatch Library as AI...
Art History
Celebration
Color Books
Color Properties
Corporate
Default Swatches
Earthtone
Foods
Gradients
Kids Stuff
Metal
Nature
Neutral
Patterns
Scientific
Skintones
System (Macintosh)
System (Windows)
Textiles
VisiBone2
Other Library

03 — Choose an appropriate colour palette – I've gone for something organic and have used tone to start adding depth. Illustrator has some really nice pre-determined colour palettes in the Swatch fly-out menu (select Open Swatch Library).

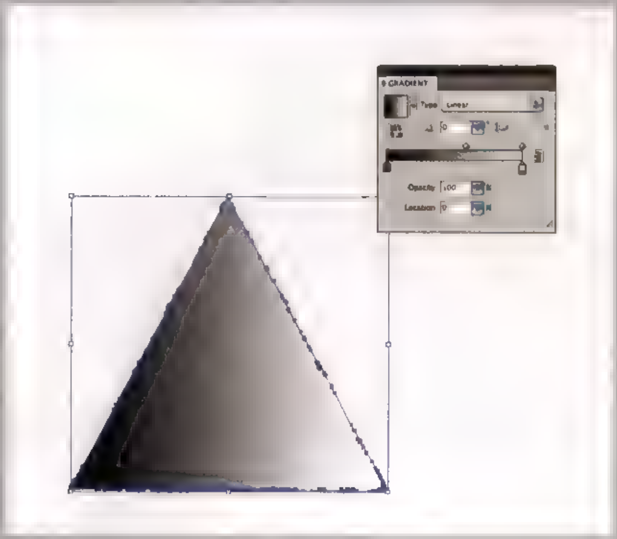
›


New Brush...
Duplicate Brush
Delete Brush
Select All Unused
Show Calligraphic Brushes
Show Art Brushes
Show Bristle Brushes
Show Pattern Brushes
Thumbnail View
Brush Options
Open Brush Library
Save Brush Library
Arrows
Artistic
Borders
Bristle Brush
Decorative
Vector Packs
Wacom 6D Brushes
Other Library...
Artistic_Calligraphic
Artistic_ChalkCharcoalPencil
Artistic_Ink
Artistic_Paintbrush
Artistic_ScrollPen
Artistic_Watercolor

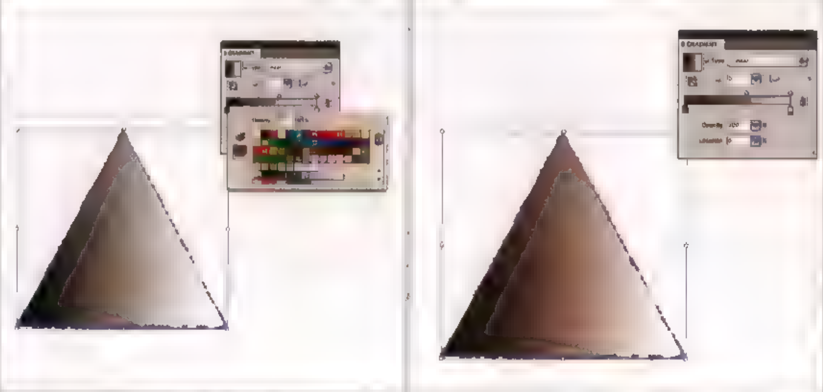
04___ Now let's add texture to the edges of our flat shapes to give them a slight hand-drawn feel. Open the Brushes panel, select the drop-down menu and go to Open Brush Library> Artistic>ChalkCharcoalPencil.


Illustrator
File
Edit
Object
Type
Select
Effect
View
Window
Help
Transform
Arrange
Group
Ungroup
Lock
Hide
Expand Appearance
Flatten Transparency...
Rasterize...
Create Gradient Mesh...
Create Object Mosaic
Create Trim Marks
Slice
Path
Blend
Envelope Distort
Perspective
Live Paint
Live Trace
Text Wrap
Clipping Mask
Compound Path
Artboards
Graph
CA_Tutorial_IB_v1.ai* @ 150% (CMYK/Preview)

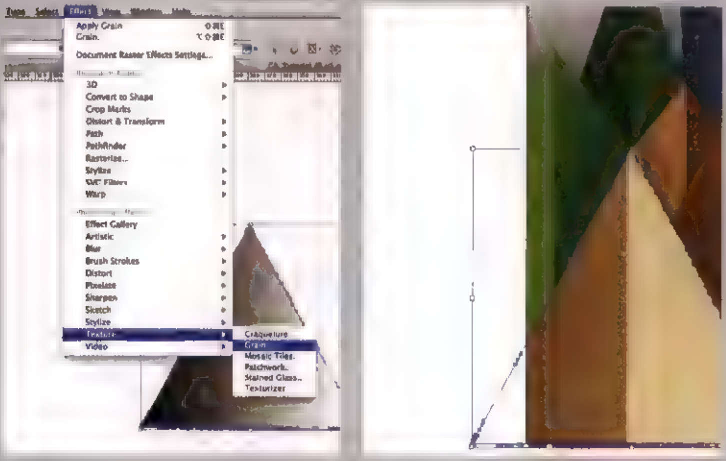
05___ Select a shape and apply your chosen brushstroke. Once you're happy with the stroke, go to Object>Expand Appearance. Next, select Merge from the Pathfinder panel: this will make the shape whole, rather than retain the stroke. Repeat this for all of the elements you add the stroke to.

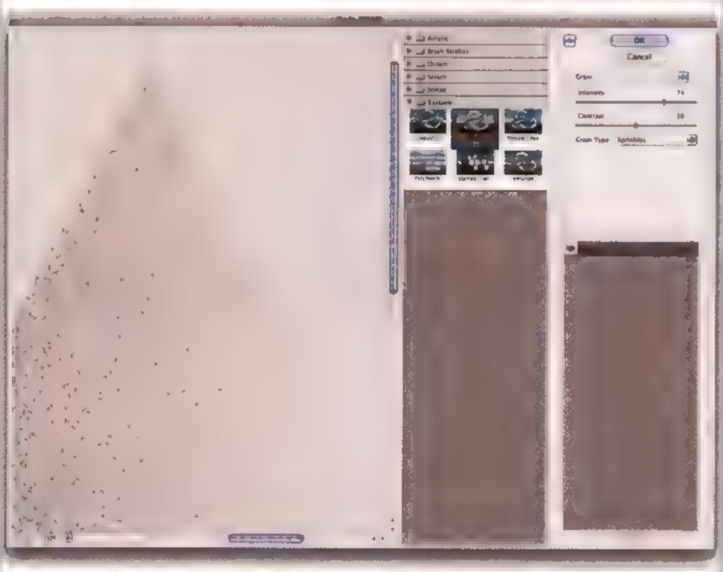

GRADIENT
Type
Linear
Opacity
Location

06___ Next, we want to add a nice gradient with a textured, grainy feel. This will add depth, but with a retro style. The first thing to do is copy a segment of your illustration.

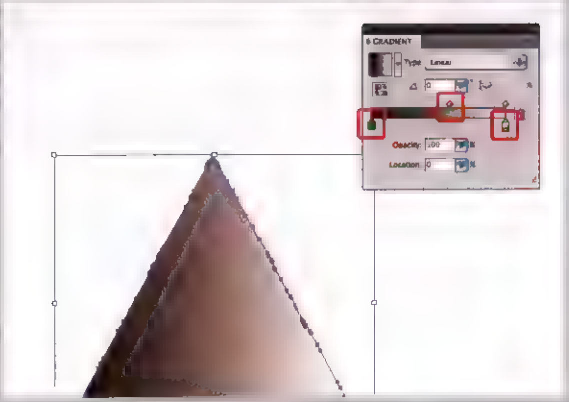


07___ Now apply your gradient, preferably ensuring it fades from dark to white. You can do this by clicking into the Gradient panel and then clicking the default black stopper – this should open up your swatches.

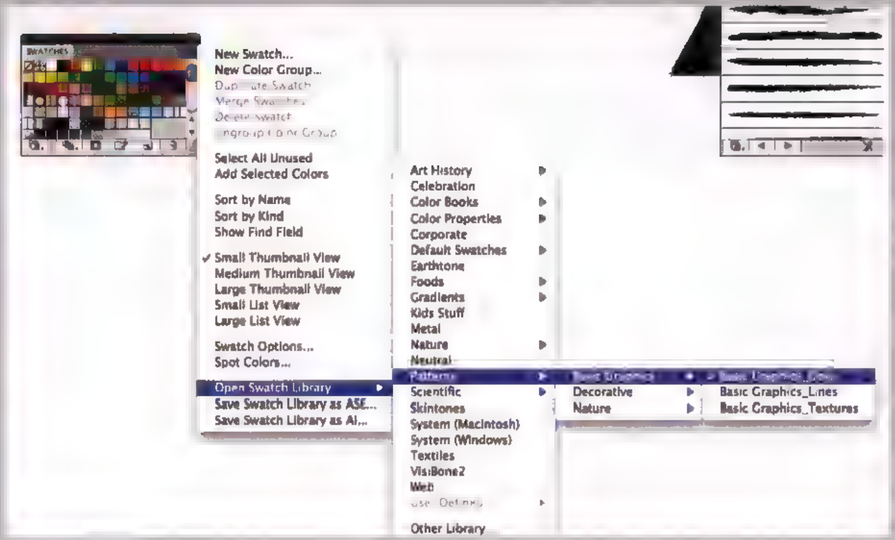

Effect
Apply Grain
Grain...
Document Raster Effects Settings...
3D
Convert to Shape
Crop Marks
Distort & Transform
Path
Pathfinder
Rasterize...
Stylize
SVG Filters
Warp
Effect Gallery
Artistic
Blur
Brush Strokes
Distort
Pixelate
Sharpen
Sketch
Stylize
Texture
Video
Craquelure
Grain
Mosaic Tiles
Patchwork
Stained Glass...
Texturizer


OK
Cancel
Grain
Intensity
Contrast
Grain Type
Sprinkles
Texture

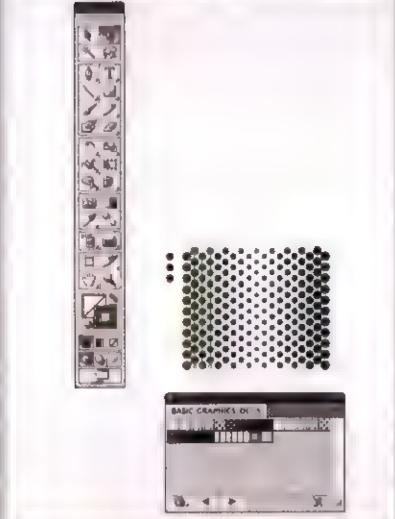
08___ Go to Effects>Texture>Grain. Set the intensity to 74, contrast to 50 and grain type to Sprinkles. You can experiment with all these settings until you are happy. Hit OK and, finally, in the Transparency panel drop-down menu, select Multiply. Now place your gradient back over the shape.


GRADIENT
Type Linear
Opacity 100
Location 0

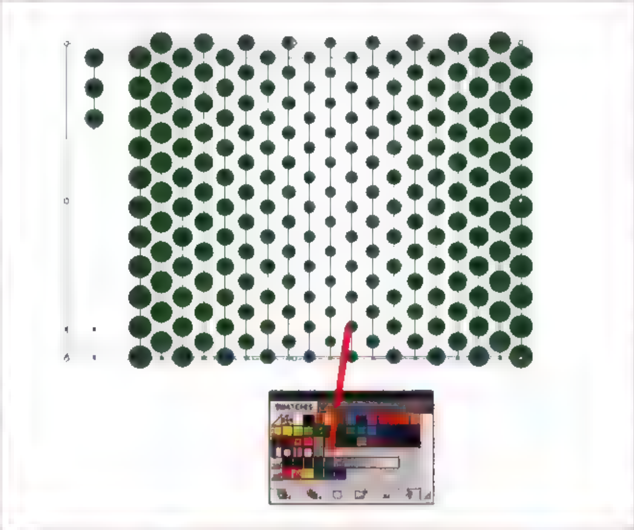
09___You can experiment with the direction and scale of your gradient by selecting the Gradient tool and dragging the cursor left to right or visa versa. Tweaking the sliders within the Gradient panel will also enable you to control the size of the gradient. Experiment with this process: long gradients lead you into a design; short, sharp gradients


SWATCHES
New Swatch...
New Color Group...
Duplicate Swatch
Merge Swatches
Delete Swatch
Ungroup Color Group
Select All Unused
Add Selected Colors
Sort by Name
Sort by Kind
Show Find Field
✓ Small Thumbnail View
Medium Thumbnail View
Large Thumbnail View
Small List View
Large List View
Swatch Options...
Spot Colors...
Open Swatch Library
Save Swatch Library as ASE...
Save Swatch Library as AI...
Art History
Celebration
Color Books
Color Properties
Corporate
Default Swatches
Earthtone
Foods
Gradients
Kids Stuff
Metal
Nature
Neutral
Patterns
Scientific
Skintones
System (Macintosh)
System (Windows)
Textiles
VisiBone2
Web
User Defined
Other Library
Basic Graphics
Decorative
Nature
Basic Graphics_Dots
Basic Graphics_Lines
Basic Graphics_Textures

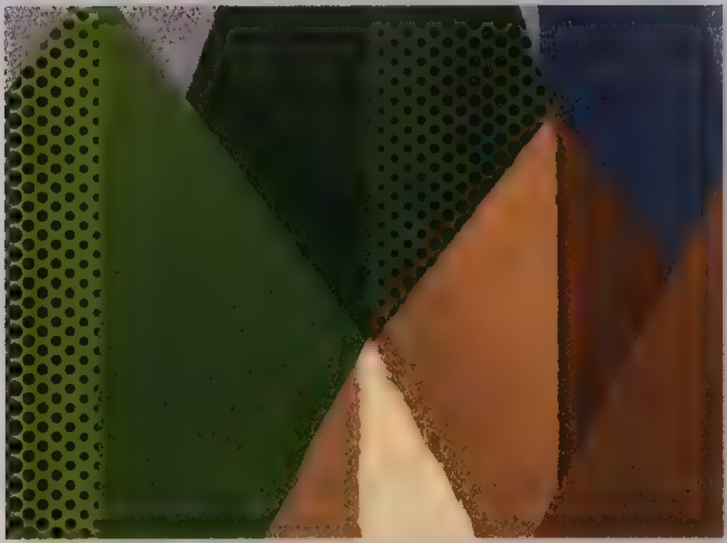
10___Next we want to add some halftone patterns. Utilising another pre-set panel in Illustrator, open the Swatches drop-down menu and go to Open Swatch Library> Patterns> Basic Dots. We want to customise the colour to suit our colour palette.


BASIC GRAPHICS_DOTS

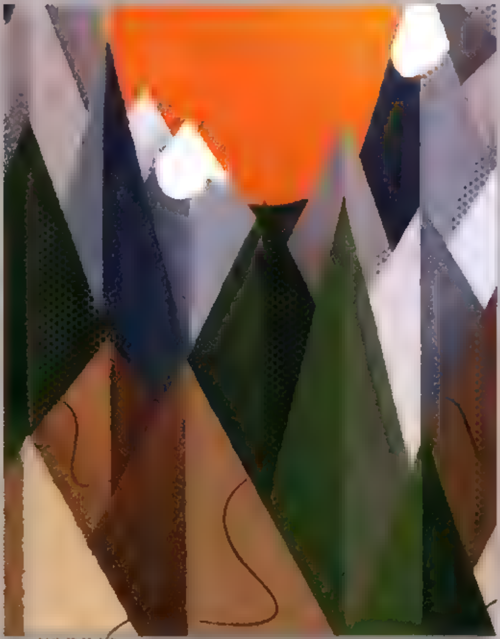
11___Grab and then drag the pattern swatch you want onto your desktop. Then, with your Direct Selection tool, carefully click the line of the dots and colour it up. Repeat this for all the rows of dots.



12___With your black arrow, pick up the group of dots and drop it into your normal swatch panel. Next, copy a section that you want to apply it to, select the swatch and move the element back: you now have a halftone texture.



13___Playing around with the colour and intensity of the dots will help create a really interesting effect. However, all these steps will only be a success if the colours are adding to the sense of depth.



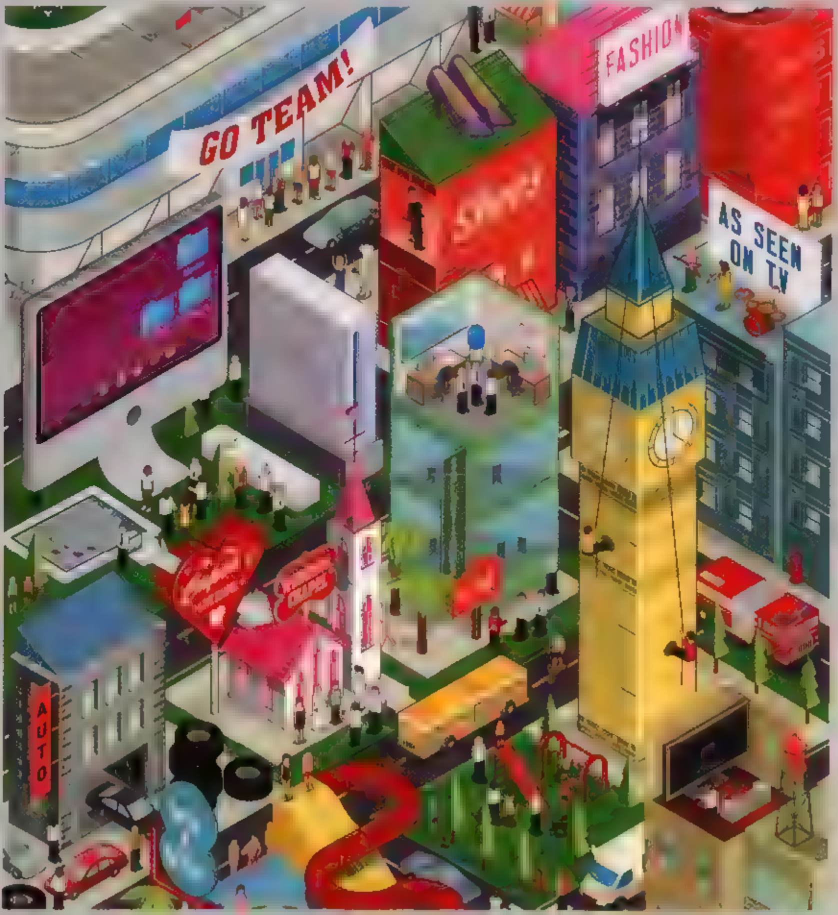
14___Lastly, start adding in the finishing details. I created snow on the tops of the mountains in my scene, and also a path that is just a single stroke. These extras help guide the viewer through the design.

Illustrator CS3 or later

Create a 3D custom map

Radio explains how to create isometric icons using a grid and the 3D Extrude tool

We normally work to an unwritten formula when we do isometric work. We keep things as simple and accurate as possible by using a grid and working with colour guides to keep the icons in the same shade and tint. Over the following steps, we'll walk through how to create isometric icons that you can build up into a 3D custom map or cityscape image. Once you get the hang of drawing the simplest shapes in this isometric style, you can draw just about anything.

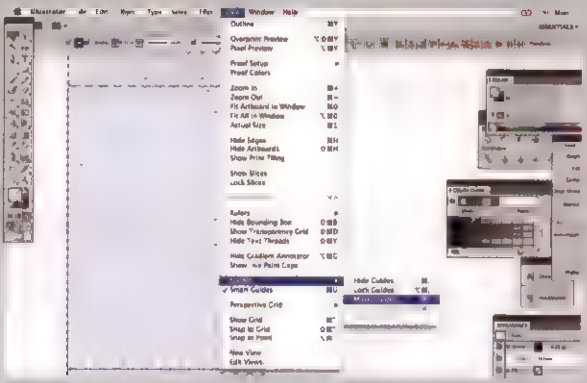

GO TEAM!
FASHION
AS SEEN ON TV
AUTO

Radio
__ Based in Cape Town, South Africa, Radio specialises in illustration, iconography and design. The studio's goal is to maintain high levels of craft across all its work, while ever-evolving its style. www.madebyradio.com

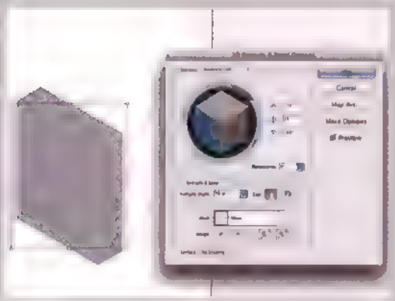
Time needed
1 hour

Assets
You'll find the full size screengrabs for each step of this project at www.computerarts.co.uk/illustratoressentials

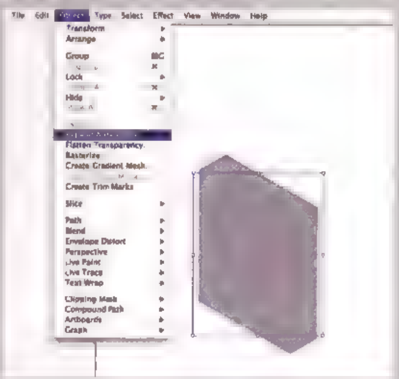
Skills
- Master grids
- Use the 3D Extrude tool effectively
- Shade 3D objects


Outline
Overprint Preview
Pixel Preview
Proof Setup
Proof Colors
Zoom In
Zoom Out
Fit Artboard in Window
Fit All in Window
Actual Size
Hide Edges
Hide Artboards
Show Print Tiling
Show Slices
Lock Slices
Rulers
Hide Bounding Box
Show Transparency Grid
Hide Text Threads
Hide Gradient Annotator
Show Live Paint Gaps
Smart Guides
Perspective Grid
Show Grid
Snap to Grid
Snap to Point
New View
Edit Views
Hide Guides
Lock Guides
Make Guides

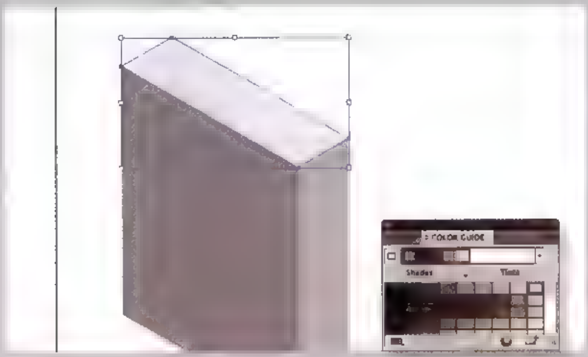
01__ The first thing to do is find a good reference image of the element that you are trying to draw. Next, open Illustrator and make a grid: we use a blend of lines at 30° and -30° and then go to View>Make Guides. This helps to keep everything at the correct angles for your final scene.



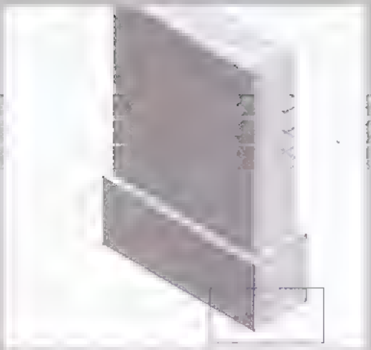
02__ Next, draw a rectangle. Using the 3D Extrude tool is a quick and easy way to get your rectangle into an isometric shape. You can play with the settings like Extrude Depth to get it looking how you want. We turn Surface to No Shading, as we prefer to do this ourselves.


File
Edit
Object
Type
Select
Effect
View
Window
Help
Transform
Arrange
Group
Lock
Hide
Flatten Transparency
Rasterize
Create Gradient Mesh
Create Trim Marks
Slice
Path
Blend
Envelope Distort
Perspective
Live Paint
Live Trace
Text Wrap
Clipping Mask
Compound Path
Artboards
Graph

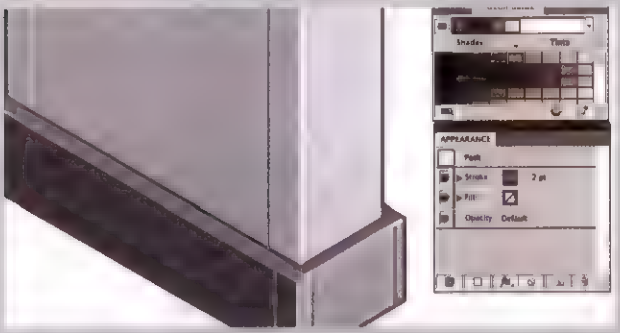
03__ Now go to Object>Expand Appearance. This makes it easier to work with the shapes. Use your grid if you need make the shape longer or taller.



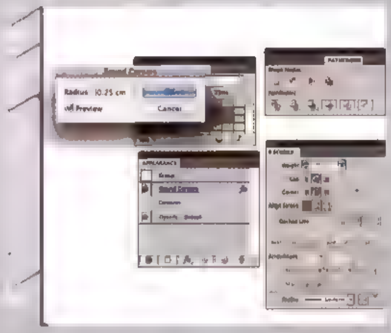
04 After selecting your colour palette, add colour. Make sure you consider where your light source is. As a rule, we normally make the top part of an element the lightest, with the right-hand side one shade darker.



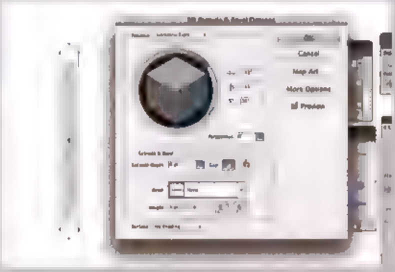
05 Use smart guides to be more accurate – this will particularly help when you draw the stroke around your objects. We normally do the darkest shade around the entire image and then a much lighter shade for the highlights. Keep your dark outside stroke on the top layer, otherwise the lighter highlights will overlap.



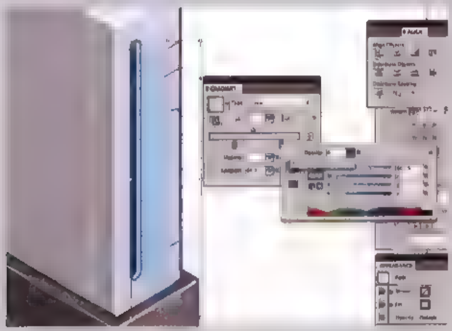
06 Now start to add the really tiny details, making sure you adhere to your colour guide. Duplicate your first stroke here and make it two or so shades lighter (although not lighter than your main highlights).



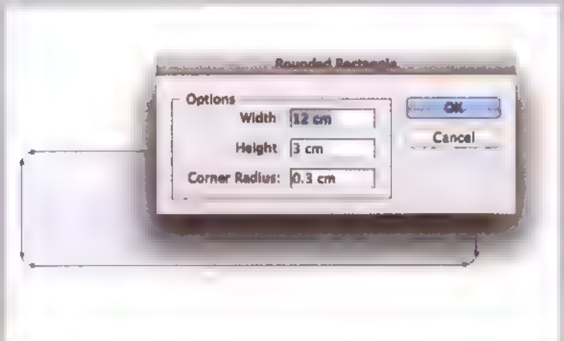
07 A tip for when you're adding the details is that using Round Corners (Effects>Stylize) is a quick way to add curves while still keeping it isometric.



08 For the disc entrance, we drew a rounded rectangle and used the 3D Extrude tool. For a flat shape like this, turn the Extrude Depth to 0. Expand the shape, add colour and a stroke around the element as you did before.

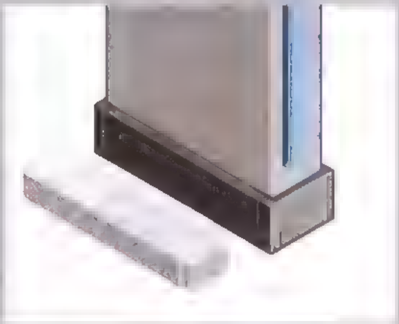


09 We created the blue light by adding a Linear gradient at 0°. Make both swatches the same shade of blue but drag the opacity of the right swatch down to 0.

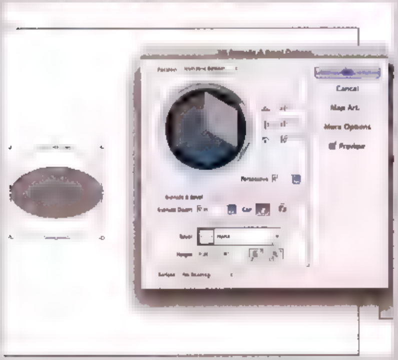


Rounded Rectangle
Options
Width: 12 cm
Height: 3 cm
Corner Radius: 0.3 cm

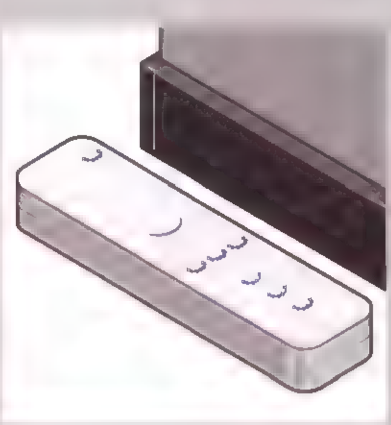
10 To draw the remote, make a rounded rectangle and play with the corner radius setting.



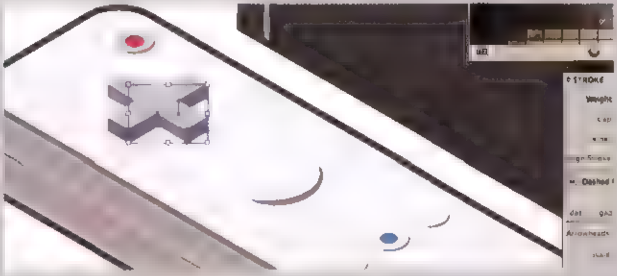
11 Once you have your rounded rectangle, use the 3D Extrude tool to extrude the shape. Again, expand and colour – as in the previous steps.



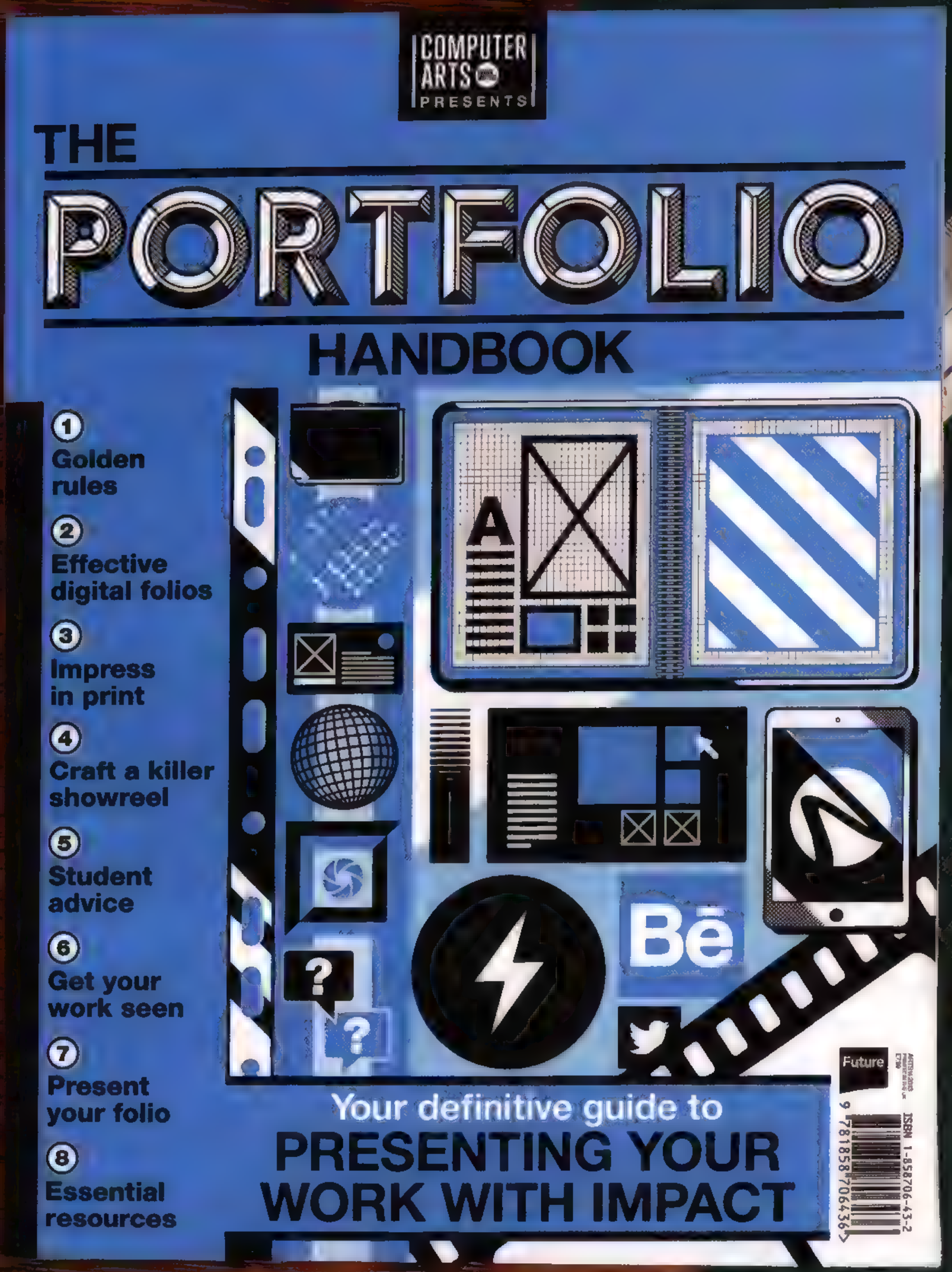
12 For smaller details like the circles here, repeat the process we already outlined, playing with the position options to get them at the right angle.



13 To add the button detail, use a stroke with a tapered edge. This makes the shape look a lot smoother.



14 The last bit of detail on the remote is the cross button. Draw it flat and extrude the shape then add colours and shading as before. Now you can create the rest of the elements in your city individually, pasting each icon into the final scene on a new layer.



COMPUTER ARTS PRESENTS

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② Effective digital folios

③ Impress in print

④ Craft a killer showreel

⑤ Student advice

⑥ Get your work seen

⑦ Present your folio

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150 ways to be a better Illustrator user in illustration, logo design and packaging

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Harness the full power of Illustrator's tool set and refine your techniques for a smoother, more efficient workflow...

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Take control of your identity projects with 50 expert ways to create better logos in Adobe Illustrator

PACKAGING SKILLS ____130

Refine your packaging workflow with these 50 expert tips for getting more from Illustrator

ILLUSTRATION TOP 50

Harness the full power of Illustrator's tool set and refine your techniques for a smoother, more efficient workflow

1 Smooth out your lines

One of the quickest ways to clean up any rough vector shapes or stray anchor points and make your linework a little smoother is to use the Smooth tool, found in the Pencil tool's fly-out menu. You can then edit the tolerance settings for fidelity and smoothness.

2 Get more from the Eyedropper

Hold down Shift while clicking with the Eyedropper tool, and Illustrator will grab just the colour from the area you've clicked and apply it to the attribute you've selected – either the stroke or fill. This is useful if, for instance, you've placed a photograph and want to pick out a certain colour to apply to the fill of a shape.

3 Set up a Swatch Library

If you often find yourself deleting unwanted default swatches and trawling through previous projects to find the perfect colour that you've used before, then setting up a custom swatch library can save a lot of time, especially if you use a very similar colour palette across different illustrations.

4 Tweak gradients quickly

If you use the Eyedropper tool to adjust a single colour slider in a gradient, it replaces the gradient with a fill colour. So, select the shape and, in the Gradient palette, click the colour slider you want to adjust, then Alt/Opt+click on the required swatch in the Swatches palette. Only the selected gradient colour will be changed.

5 Duplication shortcuts

Many illustrators duplicate shapes by holding Alt/Option and dragging, but it can be tricky to align them perfectly. Try using Ctrl/Cmd+C and Ctrl/Cmd+F to paste a copy directly above the original, or Ctrl/Cmd+B to paste behind it. Useful when applying effects to separate shapes, or layering objects with masks when you don't want to move the original.

6 Apply text to a path

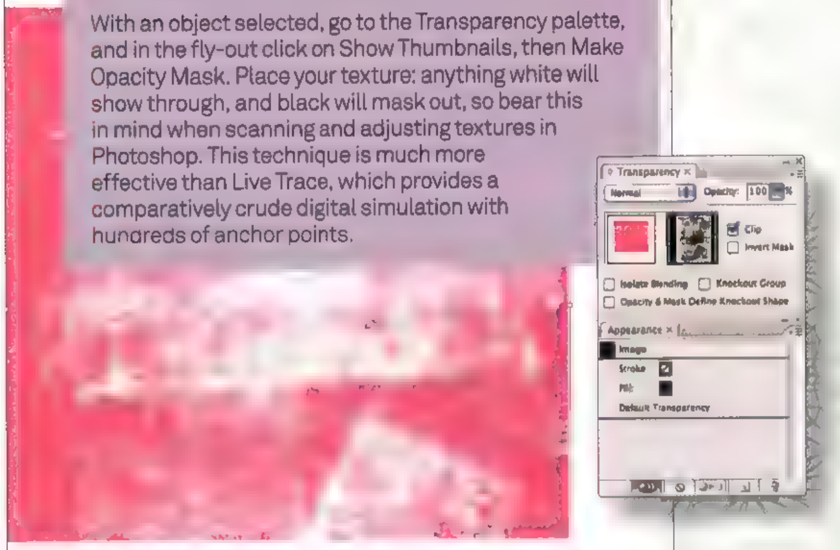
If you find yourself transforming and warping text to fit along a path, remember that Illustrator has a built-in tool for this. Draw your desired path and select the Path Text tool from the Text tool fly-out. Hover the cursor over the path, click, and type whatever you need. Using the Selection tool you can click and drag the cursor to the inside or outside of the circle.

7 Know your limits

Illustrator is great for vector work, but if you load it up with too many effects, imported images and

8 ADD TEXTURE WITH OPACITY MASKS

With an object selected, go to the Transparency palette, and in the fly-out click on Show Thumbnails, then Make Opacity Mask. Place your texture: anything white will show through, and black will mask out, so bear this in mind when scanning and adjusting textures in Photoshop. This technique is much more effective than Live Trace, which provides a comparatively crude digital simulation with hundreds of anchor points.


Transparency
Normal
Opacity: 100 %
Clip
Invert Mask
Isolate Blending
Knockout Group
Opacity & Mask Define Knockout Shape
Appearance
Image
Stroke
Fill:
Default Transparency

complicated colour masks, then it can start to slow down and become sluggish. Know when the time is right to move to an alternative program: Photoshop can often handle the same effects much more quickly, saving you time and strife.

9 Have fun with colour theory

To quickly tweak the colour of an illustration, go to Edit>Edit Colors for a selection of often underused features such as Saturation, Colour Balance and Recolor Artwork. In the small drop-down menu at the top, you'll find colour harmony suggestions, including complementary, shades and monochromatic.

10 Custom strokes with the Width tool

For bespoke outlines, create your linework with the Pen or Pencil, and then use the Width tool to thicken or thin the lines at any point using anchor points. If you're frequently creating lines of a similar style – a pen line that thickens in the middle and trails off like an ink pen stroke, for instance – then save a version of it in the Profiles menu within the Stroke menu.

11 Save time with the Symbol Sprayer

When creating random collections of the same symbol, the Symbol Sprayer tool is much more efficient than copying and pasting. For a sky filled with tiny stars, create a tiny white dot, drag it into the Symbols palette, select it with the Sprayer tool and just spray the dots around. They'll be retained as a Symbol Set, but can be split into separate objects by clicking Object>Expand.

12 Scale in proportion

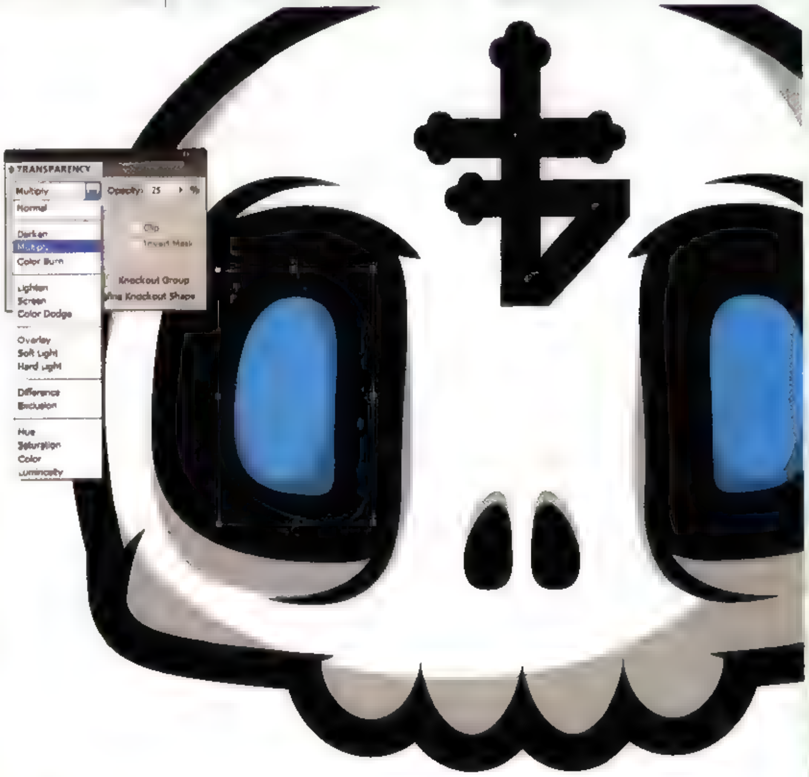
When you're scaling an illustration that has lots of different strokes, brushes and effects applied, double-click on the Scale tool to bring up the Preferences panel, then tick Scale Strokes and Effects. This will ensure that everything is kept in proportion without having to expand anything.

13 Lighting effects with Opacity masks

An easy way to add highlights to an object is to give it a black-to-white gradient, and then apply an Opacity mask so that only the white areas of the gradient are visible. You can then re-colour the object, leaving a nice glow. The same technique also works for adding texture using black-and-white Film Grain effects.

14 SHADE WITH TRANSPARENCY

When adding shading to your work, rather than using solid shapes in a darker colour, use black set to 25% Opacity and the Multiply blending mode: this gives you a darker tone of the underlaying colour. Play with different blending modes as you see fit – by mixing a solid full gradient with a colour at a low Opacity, set to Multiply, you can create some really interesting effects.


TRANSPARENCY
Multiply
Opacity: 25 %
Normal
Darken
Multiply
Color Burn
Lighten
Screen
Color Dodge
Overlay
Soft Light
Hard Light
Difference
Exclusion
Hue
Saturation
Color
Luminosity
Clip
Invert Mask
Knockout Group
Define Knockout Shape

15 Master halftone shading

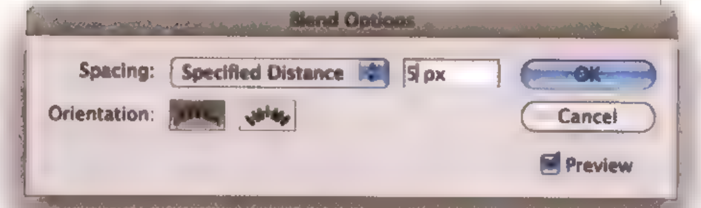
Halftone effects are very popular at present, and can be used to achieve some striking shading techniques in place of gradients. If you're working with a strictly limited colour palette, try using Illustrator's Colour Halftone effect to lay dots of one colour on top of another – red dots on white will give the illusion of pink, for instance.

16 Tidy up with the Shape Builder

A long time coming, Illustrator CS5's Shape Builder tool enables you to seamlessly join (or subtract) objects if they overlap. This is perfect for tidying up your files and having far fewer objects in your layers. If you have a layer full of overlapping shapes that are all the same colour and opacity, then highlight them all and use the Shape Builder tool to join them together as one object.

17 Save versions of your file

While it's a no brainer to save your files regularly as you work, get into the habit of saving updated versions at various key intervals as well – 'Filename_01.ai', 'Filename_02.ai' and so on. That way, you can experiment in different directions in your illustration and return to a much earlier version easily if need be.

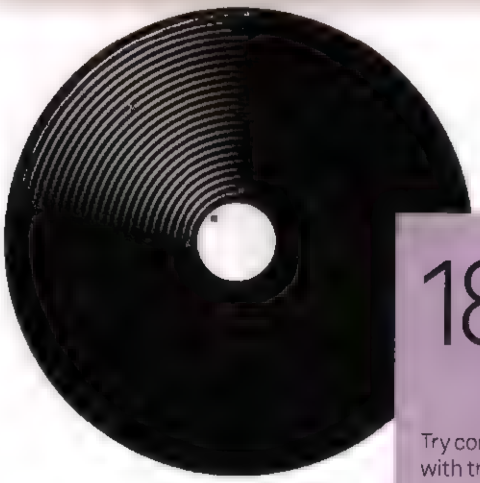


Blend Options

Spacing: Specified Distance 5 px

Orientation:

☑ Preview



18 BLEND WITH CUSTOM BRUSHES

Try combining custom-made brushes with the Blend tool. This technique gives the impression of shadows or light, and in turn can add depth to your work. The spine can be adjusted to cater to the required angle, while the individual brushes remain editable.

19 Manage resources across a project

Create libraries of colour swatches and brushes for projects that involve more than one piece of work, and save them in a Resources folder within your project directory. That way, when you start each individual piece you have everything you need at hand, without having to copy and paste elements from one document to another.

20 Don't overlook the Pen

Many illustrators rely on the Pencil or Paintbrush tools, but the Pen is invaluable for precision lines and angles. Precise curves can be very handy for shaping hair or getting that exact curve of a sports car front end, for instance. Hold Shift while dragging your second anchor point to get an exact incremental angled curve.

21 Print prep with the Pathfinder

When preparing limited colour palette illustrations for print, the Pathfinder's Divide and Unite tools are great features. Flatten any transparency, and then apply the Divide tool to the artwork. Select all elements of the same colour (Select>Same>Fill Color), and then use the Unite tool to combine them all into one united shape. Repeat this for each colour: the file is now almost ready for print, and tweaking colours is incredibly easy on the fly.

22 Align with precision

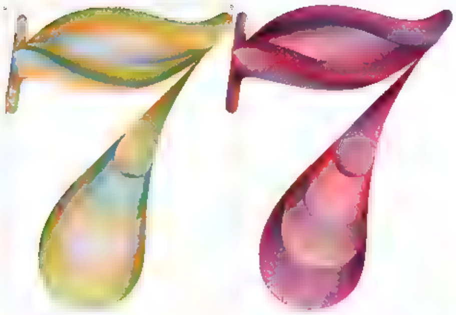
The Align tool can be incredibly handy: use it to 'one click' align objects to the centre of the artboard, align shapes to each other by edges or central points, or even align single points on a shape together. You can align shapes with even spacing, either within their group or justified to the artboard.

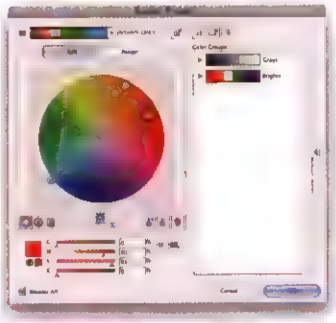
23 Colour inspiration

There are some great websites to see colour harmonies, or even specific swatch sets, submitted and compiled by other designers and the public, such as Adobe Kuler. Bring your favourites into Illustrator to add to your custom swatch library – whether collected with the Eyedropper or dragged directly from an existing set in Illustrator.

24 Turn PDF Compatibility off

Vector files typically take up less memory space then a regular raster or PSD file, but there's a simple way to make them even smaller for quick and easy storage. A complex pattern could be up to 15MB, which is considerable for a vector. Unchecking Create PDF Compatible File in the Save dialogue can decrease its filesize considerably.





25 EXPERIMENT USING RECOLOR WITH PRESET

The Edit Colours>Recolor With Preset gives you the freedom to edit your artwork's colour palette from a simple dialogue box. Choose to edit the palette manually using a CMYK colour split, by random selection using a colour wheel; or even by assigning a pre-existing swatch group. You also have options to Invert Colours, Turn Artwork to Grayscale or CMYK, among others.

26 Groups instead of layers

Grouping shapes together (Ctrl+G), such as the elements that make up a character, can sometimes be easier than putting it on its own layer – it gives you more freedom to bring objects to the back (Ctrl+[) or front (Ctrl+]) of other grouped objects instead of moving physical layers, and makes moving a character or collection of elements from one file to another a great deal simpler.

27 Get to grips with blends

Blends are great for gradually creating evolving shapes or paths – the tool can be difficult to master, but getting familiar with its behaviour will pay off in the long run. Creating custom spines can help ensure that your blend works exactly as you've planned.

28 Build a set of brushes

Custom brushes can be an excellent way to cut down your workload in the long run, if you're prepared to invest time and energy in the short term. They can often take a lot of tweaking and refining at first, but once you're done, you can add them to a library and call on them for future use in all kinds of projects.

29 Use custom brushes as shapes

Coupling your custom brushes with Pathfinder effects can yield some very interesting results. Essentially, the Pathfinder effect treats your custom brushes as shapes, which is a really manageable, non-destructive method for creating custom shapes quickly and easily.

30 Iron out the kinks

Combining the Smooth tool with the Pen tool on the fly is a great way to get rid of unsightly kinks from paths. The settings can be tricky to manage, but spend some time fine-tuning these for your desired result, and it's guaranteed to improve your efficiency and workflow.

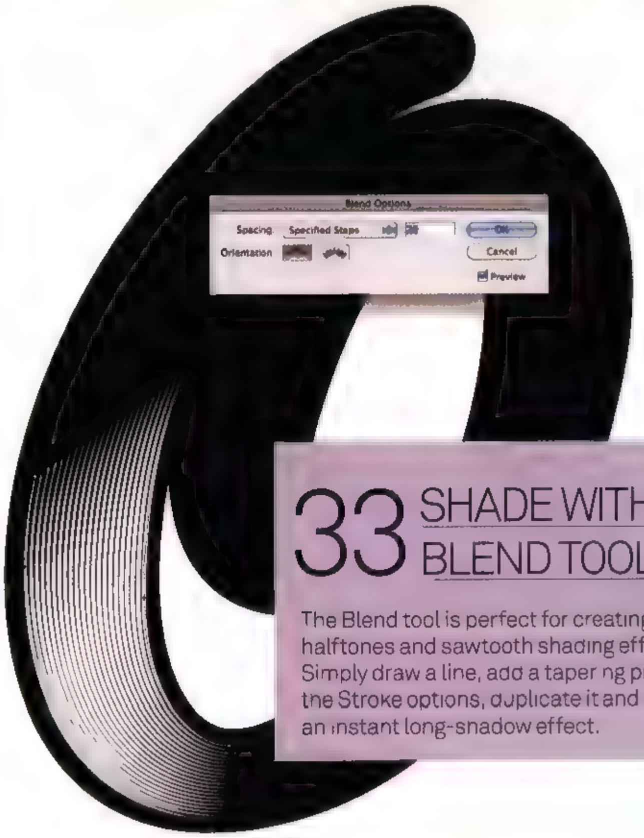
31 Paint with a tablet

Unless you have an incredibly steady hand, using the Paintbrush and Pencil tools with a mouse will always give unnatural results. With a tablet, however, they can become an integral part of your workflow and are great for adding an organic touch. Combine them with custom brushes, and spend time tweaking and manipulating their anchor points to get the best result.

32 Screenprint effects

To simulate a screenprint effect before committing to print, use the Transparency panel. The overlaid colour effect of screenprinting can be roughly simulated with the Multiply option, and an Opacity mask based on a scanned texture can add a distressed look. Familiarise yourself with the mask options, such as Clip and Invert, for a variety of results from the same source files.

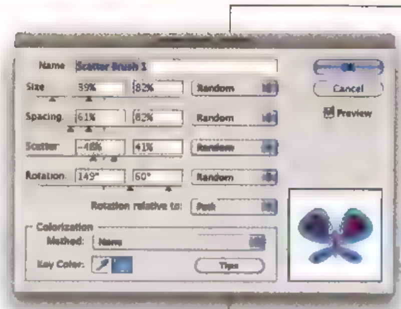
→



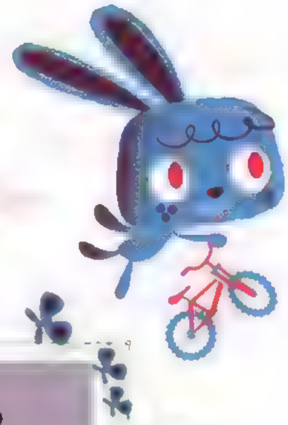
Spacing: Specified Steps

33 SHADE WITH THE BLEND TOOL

The Blend tool is perfect for creating vector halftones and sawtooth shading effects. Simply draw a line, add a tapering profile from the Stroke options, duplicate it and blend for an instant long-shadow effect.



Name: Scatter Brush 1
Size: 39% 82% Random
Spacing: 61% 82% Random
Scatter: -48% 41% Random
Rotation: 149° 60° Random
Rotation relative to: Path
Colorization
Method: None
Key Color:



34 CUSTOMISE YOUR ASSETS

Adapt Illustrator's basic tools to suit you. Bespoke brushes and swatches can be lifesavers when creating complex images with repeating elements: a custom swatch can become a texture to overlay on scenery, or a custom scatter brush can be adapted to create a flurry of butterflies.

35 Play with your palette

With the Recolor Artwork option, you can manipulate your illustration's entire colour palette without any of the distractions of bounding boxes and layer colour outlines; swap colours and fine-tune them; and even convert an image from full-colour to two-colour. Use it as a playground for experimenting with colour mixes once the hard work of illustrating is almost done.

36 Mark up your guides

Keep the intended context of your illustration in mind throughout the process. For a commissioned editorial piece, for instance, keep a layer at the top of your Layers panel that includes a white frame around the image and any gutters, margins or other exclusion zones imposed by the job. This makes it easy to see how the final image is shaping up with no bleed, and how it looks in situ.

37 When swatches aren't enough

When working with a very limited colour palette, you can make a useful visual guide by setting up a literal palette of square coloured boxes right on the artboard next to your illustration. It's more immediate than the tiny thumbnails in the Swatches palette, and can be a useful reference when using the Recolor Artwork tool

38 Add texture with Live Trace

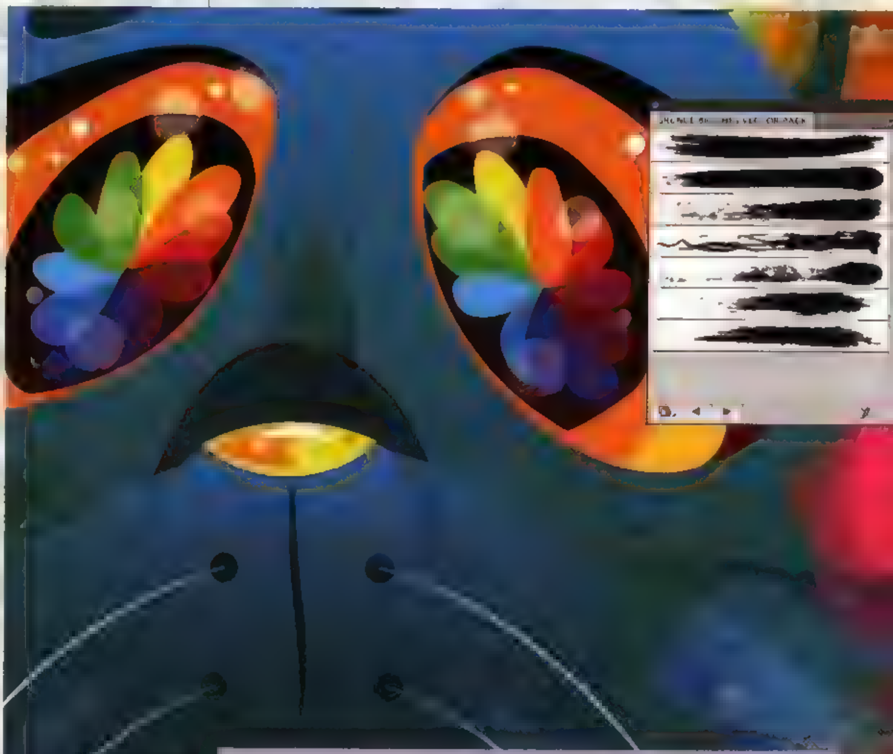
Many illustrators use Photoshop to add texture to their vector work, toggling between programs, but it's also possible to do this in Illustrator. Live Trace is a great tool for vectorising scanned textures, but these can often feel too messy and 'digital' – get around this by using Opacity masks to make the effect subtler..

39 Pucker and Bloat

These are an excellent couple of features, seamlessly helping you to curve (or bloat) sides of straight squares into the shape of a 1960s-era TV screen, or pinching (puckering) the same object into a four-pointed star. More varied looks can be achieved with multi-anchor-point objects, or by combining multiple objects.

40 Modify basic shapes with anchor points

You can turn simple shapes into complex editable objects by adding anchor points. Circles and squares are drawn with four anchor points by default: each time you go to Edit>Path>Add Anchor Point, an extra four are added. When finished, remove any excess points this provides for quick, accurate drawings of triangles, diamonds or round curves with the Circle tool, which may not be as accurate if drawn with the Bézier tool.



41 USE GRUNGE BRUSHES TO ADD TEXTURE

In the Brushes menu you'll find a set of vector 'Grunge' brushes that are great for achieving realistic brush strokes, but when used on top of flat shapes can also become a worn texture, as opposed to using highlights, gradients or illustrating textures yourself.

42 Save time with Select The Same

In an elaborate illustration, it can soon become pretty tiresome to select all instances of repeated elements to change their stroke width or colour. The Select The Same option is a fantastic way to pick all elements that share a common feature. Alternatively, convert repeated objects into symbols so you can simply modify the main symbol to apply changes across all of its instances.

43 Experiment with the Path Blending tool

Convert simple vector shapes into complex textured objects using the Path Blending tool. Split the object into two separate lines, and choose how the paths should interact. The tool also works perfectly when multiplying two objects, blending their colours and creating extra shapes within the blend. The final result will react and re-render with any further changes that you might make to its shape or direction.

44 Enhance your linework

If your artwork starts with a simple single-line sketch, you can develop this to make it more appealing and attractive using the Outline Stroke feature. This turns a single line into a four-sided object, to which you can then add any graphical style or gradient colour that you can't with a simple stroke.

45 Use Global Colours on commercial jobs

Client changes are inevitable. Setting your colour swatches to Global Colours can help you to alter every colour instance within your artwork to a new PMS or CMYK reference. When preparing for a new commission, be sure to set all of your colours as Global: double-click the colour box in Swatches and tick Global Colour.

46 Swatches Library for Exchange

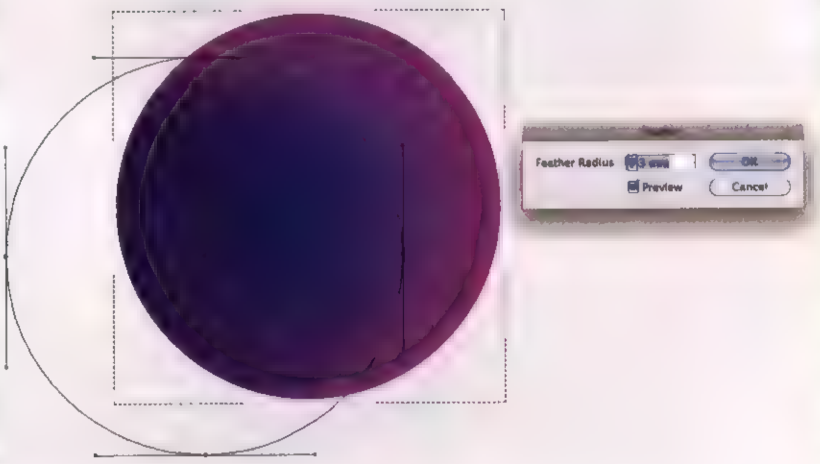
When you have built up a swatch colour library in Photoshop or InDesign, save yourself time importing each colour one by one, or even adding them by CMYK values. Simply just export your current Swatches for Exchange. The .ASE file can then be added to via Open Library in the Swatches Option into your menu.

47 Make the most of Opacity masks

Opacity masks have lots of uses, from shadows and fades to more illustrative effects such as simulating wispy hair. Simply copy and Paste In Front the element you want to mask, and colour it with a black-and-white gradient. From here, you can link the two and tweak the fade on the mask separately until you're happy with the result.

48 ADD VOLUME WITH THE FEATHER EFFECT

The Feather effect is one of the easiest ways to add a sense of volume to your objects, especially when combined with the Draw Inside tool. Select the necessary shape click on Draw Inside, draw a shape inside it and select Effect>Stylize>Feather. Then choose your radius of transparency.


Feather Radius 3 mm
☑ Preview

49 Create flourishes with the Width tool

Introduced in CS5, the Width tool is a great way to create effective flourishes with varying line stress. Draw a spiral and give it a 1pt stroke, then select the Width tool and click and drag at one end of the line for an instant flourish. You can practice with this to create some really complex designs.

50 Subtle gradients

Instead of working with solid colour shapes, use gentle gradients instead to magically add a sense of volume. One great trick is to change the transparency of selected gradient colours – used in combination with Illustrator's Draw Inside mode this can add subtle shadows to objects.

LOGO DESIGN TOP 50

Take control of your identity projects with 50 expert ways to create better logos in Illustrator

1 Use Select>Same

Quickly modify the colour of multiple shapes with the same fill or stroke by using the Select>Same options. These come in handy when you need to match a colour to a Pantone swatch, or experiment with different colourways. Go to Select>Same and you can select all shapes with the same fill colour or stroke colour.

2 Edit in the Layers palette

Grouping layers makes life a lot easier when working on a complex design, but regrouping and reorganising the groups to get access to the right path can be a pain. Remember, then, that you can select and edit individual paths or shapes in the Layers palette. Click on the circle icon in the path sublayer, and you'll be able to identify and edit the path more easily. Hold Shift to select multiple paths this way.

3 Lock layers

Stacking shapes and paths upon each other is all too easy, but can make selecting paths at different depths difficult later on. If you're working on a complex logo with many layers, lock the shapes you know you won't need to edit. Hit Ctrl/Cmd+2 and lock the layer. Then, whenever you want to select a layer beneath or above, Illustrator will bypass the locked layer.

4 Customise your interface

Illustrator CS4 and CS5 each have editable interface set ups. With this in mind, it's a good idea to try and identify the tools and processes you most rely on, and undock these from the Tools palette. For instance, if a tool naturally resides as a sub menu within another tool, click and hold on it, then move it to detach it from the main palette to somewhere more convenient on your interface.

5 Have multiple workspaces

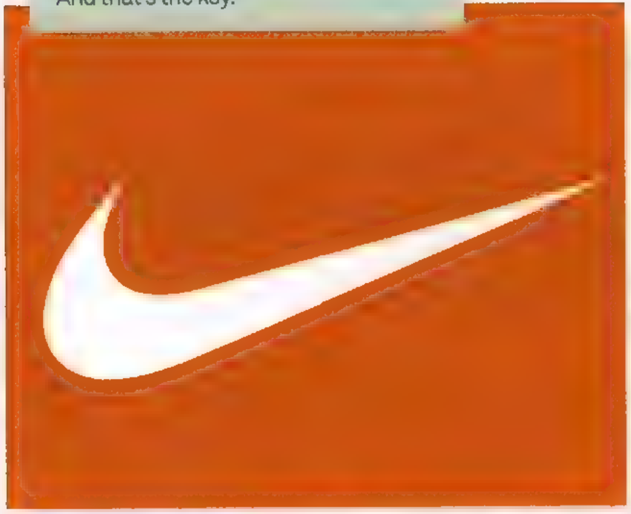
Whether you detach tools, prefer certain palettes open, collapsed or not present on your interface at all, Illustrator CS4 and CS5 let you save your preferred workspaces. Try setting up two or three for particular functions – for instance, an uncluttered space for ideas and sketches, an editing option and a general option, then flick between each for specific tasks. This is often faster than reorganising palettes on the fly.

6 Edit without redrawing

A basic function that's often overlooked is Illustrator's ability from CS4 onward to edit points on a path without worrying about disrupting the anchor point – a godsend for quick edits to shapes without having to redraw or reposition them. With the Direct Selection

7 KEEP IT SIMPLE

The best logos are the ones that are recognised in varying sizes and with elements of the design covered. Just think of the first half of Nike's tick, or Google's colours, for example – instantly recognisable; but simple. And that's the key.



tool, click on a line segment between two points on a path and you can drag its Bézier curve without moving the anchor points.

8 Group objects

If you regularly create new objects by grouping two or more existing objects, remember that these inherit the editable parameters of the individual shapes, so you can directly control their sub-layer order. So, rather than merging this collection of objects into a single object, group them. The sub layers (or original objects) can then be reordered with Ctrl/Cmd+[or].

9 Align in one go

The Align palette is more precise than relying on guides and the snap-to rules. When drawing, ignore grids and absolute alignments, and concentrate on your creation. Later in the process, open your Align palette and snap the elements you need to align into place in a single process.

10 Keep clipping masks on top

Always ensure your clipping masks are the top layer of a group, and that the group is on top of your layers. This way, Illustrator will use less memory to create the clipping path, making it less prone to annoying crashes.

11 Make swatch libraries

Swatch library creation is one of those things we all mean to do but never quite remember to do in practice. Well, the pros far outweigh the cons here, as Illustrator allots memory space to imported swatches. By creating and saving swatch libraries, Illustrator loads them upon start-up, freeing memory and speeding up application of the swatch as and when you need it.

12 Remember the Actions panel

Illustrator has its own version of Photoshop's Actions panel. The actions are recordable, editable and saveable, and in the same way can shave precious time from a project and make repetitive tasks simple.

13 Create new actions

In the Actions panel, you'll find predefined actions including common edits like opacity drops, Unite, Shear and Rotate commands. You can create a new action by hitting New Set, naming the action, then hitting record and carrying out the task.

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14 MAKE THEM STAND OUT

When was the last time you saw a logo surrounded by nothing but pure white? Logos are rarely viewed in isolation, and by their very nature should compete for attention. Mimic this by creating a background layer of general screengrabs, bits of text, colours and random shapes. Does your logo still stand out? Does the surrounding visual noise bury your design?

15 Enable Button Mode

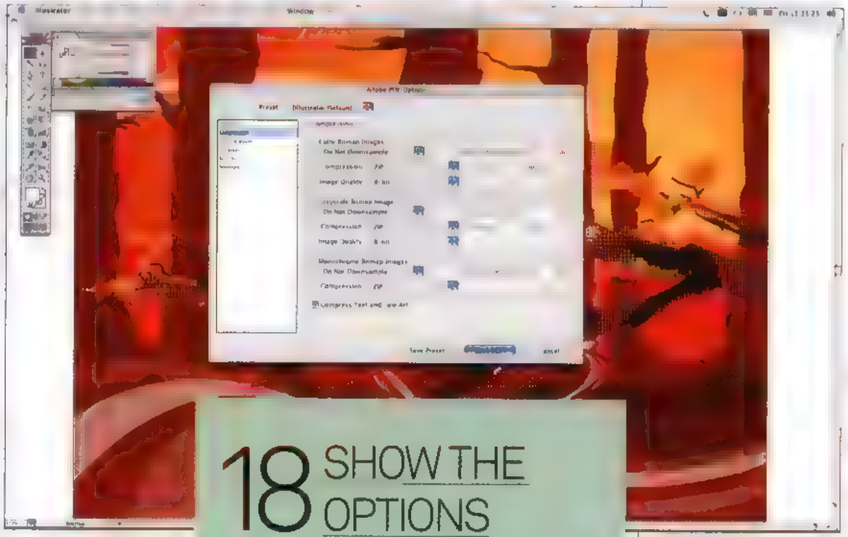
Following on from Actions is Button Mode. This lets you map particular actions across keyboard shortcuts, and can be a huge productivity booster, for instance when selecting and filling colours or saving out a design in a different format. To enable Button Mode, go to the Actions panel, double-click on an action, and select which keyboard key to map the action to.

16 Join paths

Learning keyboard shortcuts and Button Mode shortcuts is a huge productivity booster, but one that always sneaks under the radar is the functionality to join two end points. Using the Direct Selection tool, select the end points of the path(s) you want to join, and hit Ctrl/Cmd+J. For logo work in particular, and especially when customising type paths, you'll find that this a lifesaver.

17 Function key short-cuts

You can also map actions to Fn key commands then run them in combination – your OS may default particular system commands to Fn keys, so ensure these are switched off. Some ideas for Fn key actions are: Place (a photo, logo or template); Add Crop Marks; Hide/Show Artboard; Hide/Show Page Tiling.



18 SHOW THE OPTIONS

Designing a logo or brand guidelines for a client is a two way process. Your client will have expectations and ideas, some of which you might not agree with. This is where Illustrator's multiple artboards come in handy, letting you show the design differences between their ideas and yours. Use the Artboard tool to crop out designs to the client's suggestions and your own, then export directly to PDF. You can then send your client multiple versions

19 Remember the Appearance panel

When experimenting with filters and effects in your logo design, don't fall into the trap of trying something, deciding against it, and then hitting undo and starting afresh. Instead, make the most of the Appearance panel, where non-destructive parameters of any applied effect or filter reside. You can then adjust the effect options and parameters or turn them off altogether to check before and after.

20 Quick duplication

Duplicate shapes in your logo design across the same layer by holding down Alt/Opt, clicking on a shape and dragging the duplicated shape into place. This will only create a duplicate on the same layer though, so remember to move the new shape to a new layer should you need to apply separate edits, filters or fills.

21 Experiment with glyphs

Don't forget the Glyphs panel – it's a great source of inspiring shapes for logo design in Illustrator. Explore the panel in a little more detail, and try out some of the more abstract shapes as starting points for new shapes. You can use the Preview area to text out different glyphs from different typefaces.

22 Use the Pathfinder tool

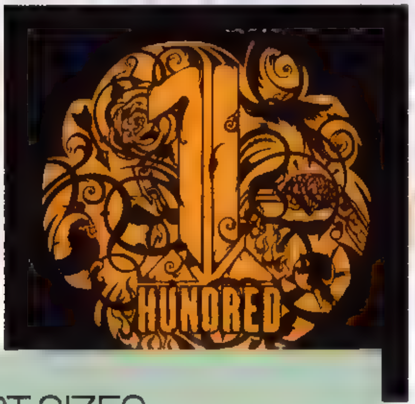
The Pathfinder tool is one of the most used and most powerful of Illustrator's general features. Using it, you can combine, subtract and create multiple shapes from existing forms – all great for designing logos. Remember though that you should always try and eliminate grouped paths rather than using the Pathfinder tool, as this makes your logo design easier to work with and keeps file size down.

23 Begin at the beginning

This means having a thorough brainstorm of the idea, creating mood boards and shape references, and narrowing the parameters of the project – from colours and form, to type. You can do this in Illustrator, of course, and it's work keeping a rough file with multiple artboards as a reference. When you do begin working on the design, keep the ideas file open as a separate tab for quick referencing.

24 Know the brief

Research the end requirements of your logo design, and get a firm understanding of how and where it will ultimately be used. For example, think about digital-only designs, and what colours work well for the brand in an RGB colour space. Similarly, if the intended use is across multiple media, think about sizing, legibility and any elements of branding that can be removed or added for different outputs.



25 TEST SIZES

If you are working on branding that's to be used in varying sizes, then do make sure you test it properly. In Illustrator, print the logo out in different sizes, from as big to as small as your printer can handle. Pin each against the wall and check for elements that are either too overbearing when printed large, or lost when printed small. You often find some parts of a logo become distracting at different sizes.

26 More on multiple artboards

Illustrator's multiple artboards are a great place to generate ideas, then discard them. You can open new artboards, and compare and contrast several themes. Try not to restrict yourself to a single canvas: set up between three and five artboards, jumping between each and trying new ideas out. When you're done, zoom out and view all your artboards to see what's working and what's not.

27 Compare different colourways...

By using multiple artboards in conjunction with the Appearance panel, you can quickly apply different colourways to different starting designs. This manner of working comes highly recommended, as it separates the form and colouring elements of a successful branding project into two distinct tasks. You may well find different colourways work better with different design forms, and this can help narrow your options.

28 ...and test them out

Your client might stipulate colours, but if not, come up with an alternative colourway – a home and away strip if you like. Sometimes simply reversing colours means your client has two branding options for the price of one. Always print these options out, though, especially if they're destined to be used in print.

29 Don't be too literal

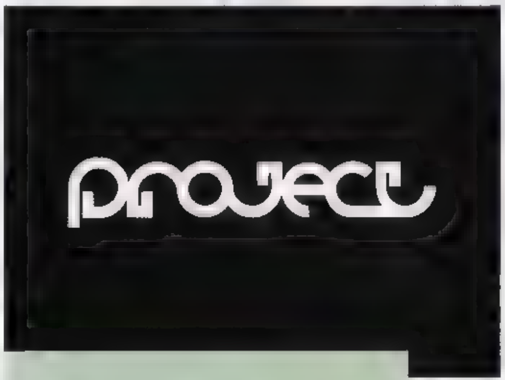
The lure in logo design, especially when working in a vector program like Illustrator, is to use illustrative elements instead of words. Thus a restaurant logo has to show some kind of food, estate agents' logos show houses, and bookshop brands show books. Yet the most recognisable brands in the world are often arbitrary to their brand's output – just because an object has relevancy doesn't mean it's necessary.

30 Remove elements

Not every logo design requires a symbol, flash or representational shape. For many clients, a masthead that incorporates legibility and a sense of uniqueness tied in with a clear, well-selected colour palette will suffice. In Illustrator, experiment with removing elements from a near-finished design. Knock out anything that interrupts the core branding – these elements may have helped in the logo's creation, but they can sometimes free up more space and yield a 'cleaner' design once gone.

31 Separate files

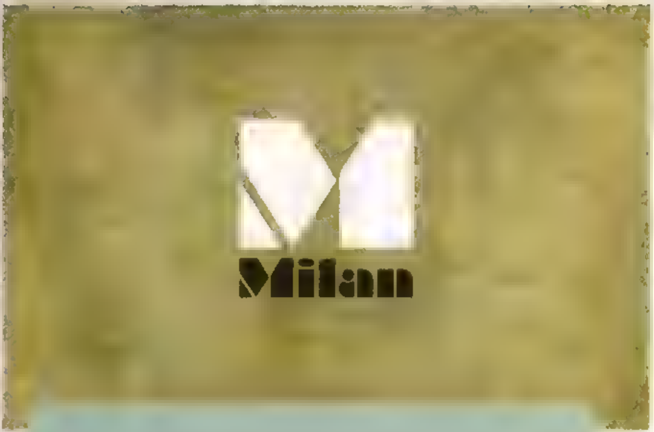
If you're working on a multiple output campaign – for instance a piece of web branding, a print design and more – break each element down into separate tasks. Allot each task its own individual project file. Then use Illustrator's File Viewer, in conjunction with Bridge, to check how each element fits the overarching project guidelines. Do they all feel part of the same brand? Do they each work separately and in unison?



32 START OUT IN BLACK AND WHITE

This doesn't mean setting up a project in Greyscale; just being selective with your initial line work. By approaching colouring sections as a separate stage you'll be able to select a colourway independently of the design considerations. This in turn will enable you to be more experimental in the colouring stage, and decide which colours work best with which objects.

FEATURES
QUICK SKILLS
TUTORIALS
SHOWCASE



33 REMEMBER THE EYEDROPPER TOOL

It might seem like a basic implement given the range of tools Illustrator has, but the Eyedropper tool sits on the Tools palette for a reason – everyone uses it. Not only does the Eyedropper enable you to quickly match colours of logo elements, but it will also apply similar effects, gradients, fills and even match type and casing for you.

34 Stick to the boundaries

The Artboard tool's rulers can be useful for checking dimensions or setting viewing guidelines. Your brief might specify a white space bleed of 3mm all around, for example. By setting up guides using the Artboard tool you can make sure you don't stray over these boundaries while designing the logo (and then realising that you need to resize elements later down the line).

35 Simplicity is key

Simple, clean logos work just as well on billboard signs as they do when used at one-inch wide. By focusing your initial ideas on the simplest mechanism for transmitting the brand identity – a flash, straight typography, shape, form, repetition or pattern, for instance – you can then bring in detail and colour at later design stages.

36 Make a new library

One a job's signed off, think about some of the elements, gradients, shapes or colourways you've used and compile a library for future logo projects or amends to the brief. Save any custom brushes, colour palettes, symbols or objects. You'll find that having the core elements of your style on hand within Illustrator's library will speed up your future projects no end.

37 Edit from one panel

Another new function found within Illustrator CS5's Appearance palette is the ability to edit multiple stroke weights, effects and fills from one panel of options. Always ensure the Preview box is checked when you're working at this stage and keep any effects layers well organised – this will help you clean up the work in the final stages.

38 Explore the Layers palette

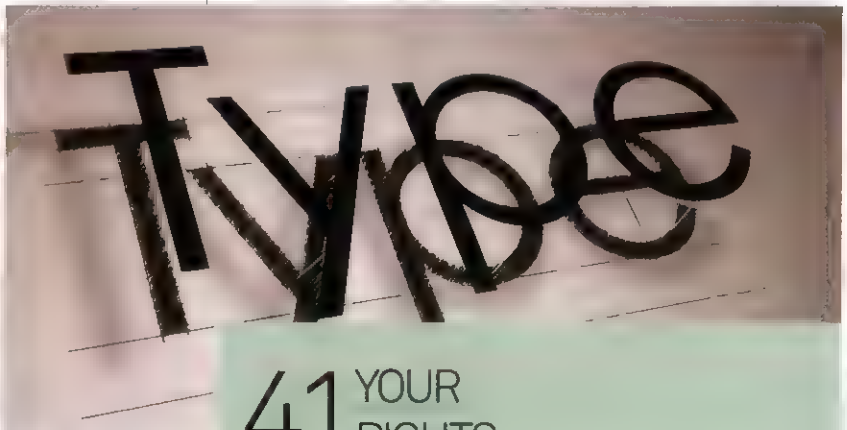
The Layers palette has become vastly more important to Illustrator in recent releases and now packs a few hidden productivity enhancements. For example, the ability to release items to separate layers is great for experimenting with the positioning of different text characters and effects; and the Target column enables you to turn effects options on and off quickly to gauge how effective each edit has been.

39 Isolation mode

Introduced in Illustrator CS3, this is a great alternative to constantly ungrouping items, or repeatedly locking and unlocking objects or layers. It can be a godsend when you're working on complex artworks and dealing with lots of grouped objects. Simply select a layer or sublayer in the Layers panel, and choose Enter Isolation Mode from the Layers panel menu.

40 Scaling strokes

Illustrator's default settings prevent you from scaling the stroke of an object at the same time as the actual object itself, and it can prove time-consuming to correct the attributes of many objects individually. To counter this, convert your strokes to outlines or, if you want them to remain editable, select 'Scale Strokes & Effects' from the Transform palette's drop-down



41 YOUR RIGHTS

Ensure the brief you receive from your client makes absolutely clear what future uses the logo may have, as well as its immediate use. For example, do they plan on animating it at any point (such as the example above), or using it on smaller branding objects? If so, it might be worthwhile suggesting a series of branded elements that can produce the same result in different mediums.

42
CREATE BRAND GUIDELINES

Text-based logos have the potential to create more questions than they answer. For example, should the text be flushed left or right? Should it ever be used with surrounding text? Test this in Illustrator and create some branding guidelines to supply your client with. They can be very simple – such as: "Always ensure a 3mm white space between logo and text" – but they will help get the best out of your logo design.

the Coke side of life

43 Third dimension

Illustrator CS4 and CS5 each pack a mean punch when it comes to working in 3D. And while they are no match for a bespoke 3D package, if you are selective with your preferences, these tools might be of use. The 3D Rotate tool, for example, makes giving your drawn objects depth and perspective a breeze, and can often really help 'lift' a logo from the page.

44 Kern manually

Illustrator has several in-built settings and parameters for working with type that are often overlooked. For logo design especially, these can be a great help, and you should spend some time familiarising yourself with Illustrator's tracking functions. For logo design, working with manual kerning is highly recommended, as it enables you to craft custom glyphs and overlaid type without fracturing the rest of the word.

45 Save styles

Illustrator's Character Styles palette enables you to set and style passages of text without having to individually style each section. To set a style, type your heading or paragraph using the font styles you want to save. Then go to Window>Type>Character Styles. In the upper-right corner will be a small arrow, which is the Styles menu. To create your own name for the style, choose New Character, or Paragraph Style, then type a name and click OK.

Thanks to... Ben The Illustrator, Simeon Eison, Bill Gardner, Alex Haigh, Chris Johnson Standley, Tom Lane, Radim Malinic, Tim Miness and Steve Wilson

46 Type on a Path

The Type on Path options introduce a few new settings to CS5 that enable you to quickly move type around a path. You can move passages of type to sit underneath a path by dragging the centre line to the opposite side of the path. You can also go to Type>Type on a Path>Type on a Path Options. In the box that appears, check the Flip box and click OK.

47 Get the type right

Make sure you learn the differences between point type and area type. Point type, created by selecting the Type tool, is so-called because it adds text to a certain point in an image. Area type, created by selecting the Area Type tool, adds text to fill a specified area of an image. In logo design you may often find creative solutions to restrictive spaces by applying type to areas rather than across a path.

48 Move the baseline

Type on a path can end up looking quite boxy at times, especially if a logo just states a single word. If you find a project doing so, adjust the baseline of the text so the path goes through the x-height as opposed to the baseline. You can also change the rotation of individual letters to fine-tune how the text fits to the path.

49 Create a trap

Illustrator has various trap commands that you should make good use of when sending your final logo design to print. The first of these is available through Window>Pathfinder>Trap – this will calculate ink densities and create an appropriate trap, but you can edit the settings and even reverse the trap if you feel the auto trap isn't quite right. You can also apply a trap as an effect, by selecting Effects>Pathfinder>Trap.

50 Keyboard shortcuts

Often you'll find the need to edit an object with both a fill and a stroke colour applied to them. When experimenting with a logo, you'll want to quickly swap, edit or remove colours or strokes, and it can be quite time-consuming to manually select and edit each. A fast way to switch the stroke and fill colour is by selecting the object and pressing Shift+X. If you then want to get rid of one of them, all that you have to do is hit the / key.

PACKAGING TOP 50

Refine your packaging design workflow with 50 expert tips for getting more from Illustrator

1 Start with a grid

Base blank canvases on a grid when creating new artwork. The same principles apply when working on curved artwork – such as a label for a tapered container – except the grid needs to follow the contours of the curve. This is particularly useful when introducing type.

2 Duplicate dielines

Copy dielines to a second layer for a quick way of checking that they haven't been modified. Adjust the colour and turn this layer off. Switch it back on as and when required, and compare your dielines against this template layer to check they're still in place.

3 Detect white overprint

The White OP Detector plug-in for Illustrator CS3–5 (www.bit.ly/White_OP_Detector) detects art and text erroneously set to overprint – which can be easy to miss when recolouring artwork on a tight deadline with View>Overprint Preview switched off. There's a fully functional free version, while the slightly less free version costs $7 for one Mac or $50 for unlimited users at one location.

4 Mass-adjust colour bars

Save time by increasing or decreasing all colour bars simultaneously in Illustrator's Color window. Hold down Alt+Shift or Ctrl/Cmd+Shift before sliding the triangle indicators up or down. In CMYK, for example, this moves all four values up or down at once, quickly producing a darker or lighter hue of the same colour.

5 Place multiple images

If you have multiple images in a folder that need to be placed in an Illustrator document, you don't need to waste time repeatedly using File>Place to insert them one by one. Highlight and select all the relevant files, and drag them on to your document – this places them all in one go.

6 Map and wrap

While the Perspective Grid tool (Shift+P) – newly added in CS5 – and Effect>3D>Extrude & Bevel are handy for demonstrating packaging concepts to clients, the artwork mapping option (Effect>3D> Extrude & Bevel>Map Art or Effect>3D>Revolve>Map Art) is even more useful – save 2D artworks as symbols (F8) and use Map Art to 'wrap' them on to 3D objects.

7 Essential testing

Test carefully before developing artwork, or you may end up wasting time making complex adjustments. Obviously cylindrical designs won't look the same once they're made up, while round or curved surfaces look significantly different when the artwork is flat, so always test it thoroughly.

8 Equally spaced artboards

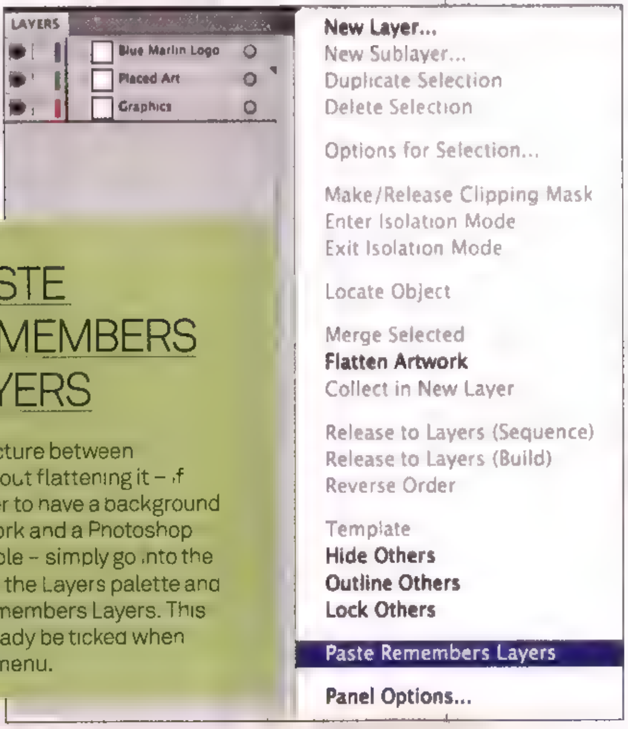
Space multiple artboards (CS4 onwards) equally – for instance, via the Spacing field in the New Document options dialogue box – so you can easily duplicate information across multiple variations of a pack. To move a cutter across artboards spaced 10mm apart, you'll just need to add 10mm to the artboard width to calculate the right move distance.

9 Shape Builder tool

Simplification is key when dealing with complex multi-layered packaging design artworks, given that you need to keep things as streamlined as possible to avoid any unnecessary complications during the production stages. Illustrator's Shape Builder tool (Shift+M) is particularly useful here for simply and efficiently joining overlapping objects.

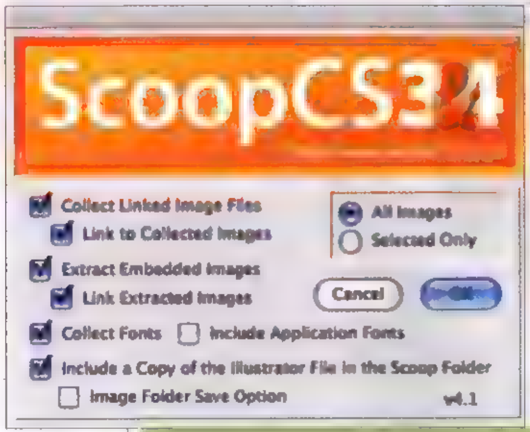
10 Sync colour settings

Go to Bridge and sync your colour settings using Edit>Creative Suite Colour Settings>Apply if you're working on a piece of packaging design in more than one application. Otherwise, you run the risk of using colours in Illustrator that aren't exactly the same in other applications within Creative Suite.


LAYERS
Blue Marlin Logo
Placed Art
Graphics
New Layer...
New Sublayer...
Duplicate Selection
Delete Selection
Options for Selection...
Make/Release Clipping Mask
Enter Isolation Mode
Exit Isolation Mode
Locate Object
Merge Selected
Flatten Artwork
Collect in New Layer
Release to Layers (Sequence)
Release to Layers (Build)
Reverse Order
Template
Hide Others
Outline Others
Lock Others
Paste Remembers Layers
Panel Options...

11 PASTE REMEMBERS LAYERS

To repeat a structure between documents without flattening it – if you set up a layer to have a background image, vector work and a Photoshop visual, for example – simply go into the Options menu in the Layers palette and select Paste Remembers Layers. This should then already be ticked when you reopen the menu.


ScoopCS34
Cancel
OK

☑ Collect Linked Image Files
☑ Link to Collected Images
● All Images
○ Selected Only
☑ Extract Embedded Images
☑ Link Extracted Images
☑ Collect Fonts ☐ Include Application Fonts
☑ Include a Copy of the Illustrator File in the Scoop Folder
☐ Image Folder Save Option
v4.1

12 COLLECT SUPPORT FILES WITH SCOOP

Use the Scoop plug-in (www.bit.ly/Scoop_CS345) to collect support files for output. It's a built-in feature of InDesign, but not Illustrator. Scoop goes into your file, collects up the images and fonts used, and saves them all in a folder. Ideal for sending to print, creating mock-ups or archiving complete jobs.

13 Improved transparency

Raster image processors have got much better at handling transparency than they used to be. Transparency previously had to be weeded out – by changing transparencies to tints, say – but it's now being dealt with much more efficiently and you can use Illustrator's transparency masks even when working with spot colours.

14 Manage layers carefully

Given the need to keep your packaging artworks as organised as possible, use layers in a regimented fashion – don't just throw them around. Introduce separate layers for trim lines, bleed lines, special finishes and so on, and try to minimise excessive use of layers wherever possible.

15 Layer effects

Layer your effects in Illustrator's Appearance panel and it will act almost like Photoshop. So if, for example, you've got a logo, a gradient running through it, a bevel embossed on it and a drop-shadow as well, you can control all of these effects via the Appearance panel.

16 Customise keyboard shortcuts

Set shortcuts for commands you use frequently. File>Place, for example, doesn't actually have a pre-set key command. Define your own via Edit>Keyboard Cuts (or Ctrl/Cmd+Alt/Opt+Shift+K). →

The program will warn you if you're trying to set a shortcut that clashes with an existing one and will give you the option to override it.

17 Make master symbols

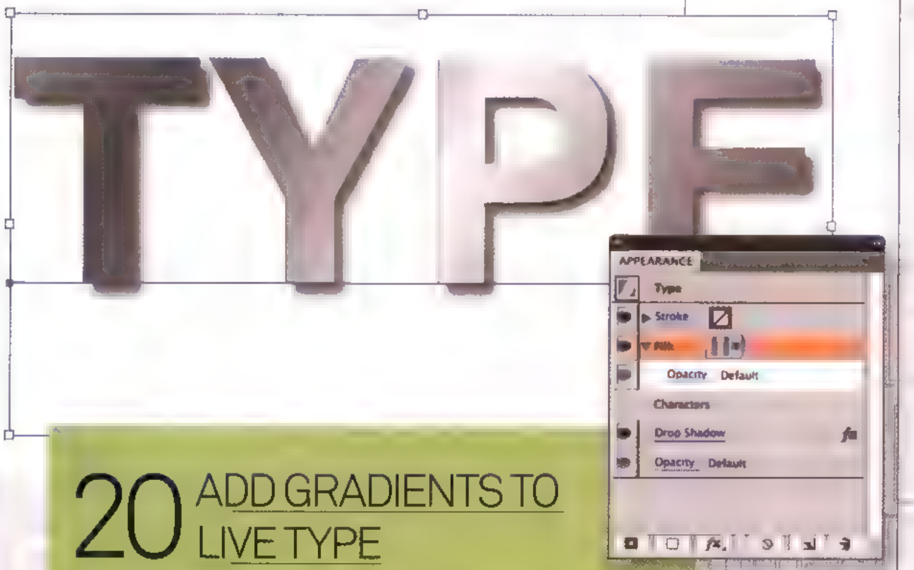
As packaging artworks may feature multiple iterations of the same logo, use the Symbols panel (Ctrl/Cmd+Shift +11) to avoid having to repeat changes across each one. Simply create the logo as a symbol and drag this onto the document. That way, you can update every instance of the logo by simply editing your master symbol.

18 Distrust dielines

Never assume that your dielines are correct. When setting them up, always print and make up a prototype so you can check all dielines are in exactly the right place. There's no point starting work on a packaging design until you've assembled a prototype and checked your measurements are exactly right.

19 Built-in metallics

Illustrator's swatch libraries make it easy to simulate metallics. In Swatches>Open Swatch Library>Metals you'll find silvers, golds and bronzes ready-built, enabling you to create an object such as a gold medal by simply clicking on gold, rather than having to drag in browns, oranges and yellows.



20 ADD GRADIENTS TO LIVE TYPE

Illustrator's Appearance panel lets you add a gradient to live type. Simply save the gradient in the Swatch panel, open the Appearance panel with the type selected and add the gradient from there. This does add a faint grey line, however, so you'll need to redo it after finalising your design.

21 Turn routine steps into actions

If you always follow the same routine when starting a new packaging document – making a certain number of artboards, deleting unused swatches and pasting in a brand logo, for example – set up an action via Action>New Action so that Illustrator will repeat your routine steps with one command.

22 Rectangular eraser

You can constrain the Eraser tool to a rectangle by simply holding down Alt/Opt while using it, which enables you to make straight cuts. This is much better for cropping things out, such as when you've live-traced an image and want to chop the bottom off.

23 Select-all on a layer

You can select everything within a given layer by clicking on the small circle that appears over to the right-hand side of the name of each layer listed within the Layers panel. This means that you don't need to worry about locking the other layers beforehand.

24 Make guides with 3D

Use the 3D filter in the Effects menu to create guides if you need help with perspective. For example, if you're creating a cityscape from typography with the street dropping off into a perspective, use the 3D filter to adjust a rectangle, providing a guide for laying out your type and skewing it into place.

25 Global colours

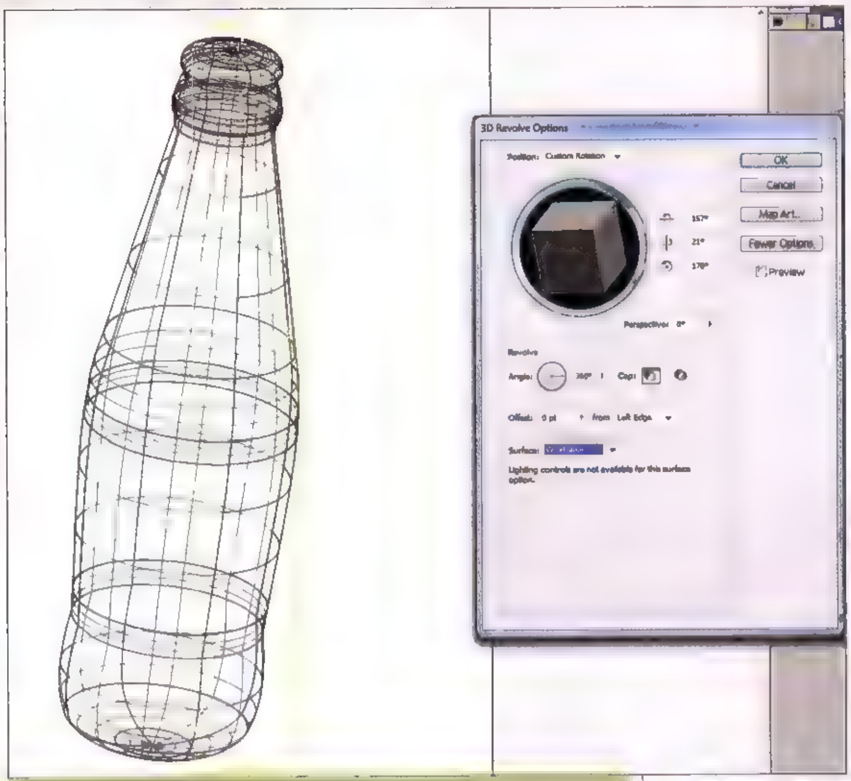
Change colours globally across an Illustrator document by replacing one swatch with another. Simply hold down Alt/Opt, then click-and-drag the new swatch onto the old one. Illustrator will replace every instance of that colour where you've used the swatch (so avoid using the colour picker, which may not be precise).

26 Finalised cutter guides

Don't start work without an approved cutter guide. You can get a cutter guide and simplify things by putting folds in one colour and dielines in another, but if you originate a cutter guide or use a work-in-progress, then your client will almost certainly want to make further changes.

27 Neat naming conventions

If you're using one PSD file and one AI file, your naming conventions should be exactly the same for both. This makes it really easy to see at a glance just where your links are. That way you can keep things organised if, for instance, you're creating lots of different skews.



Position: Custom Rotation
157°
21°
178°
Perspective: 0°
Revolve
Angle: 360°
Cap:
Offset: 0 pt from Left Edge
Surface:
Lighting controls are not available for this surface option.

28 BUILD 3D MODELS WITH REVOLVE

Use Effect>3D>Revolve to build a 3D model by spinning the stroke path at 360 degrees. So if you're mocking up a bottle design, use the Pen tool to draw half the design, then use Revolve. Preview in Wireframe (via the Surface drop-down menu) as the shaded view can be slow to manipulate.

29 Custom workspaces

Use Window>Workspace>Save Workspace to create multiple workspaces tailored and streamlined to different stages of the packaging design process, from accessing pens when drawing and moving things out of the way during colour work, to putting your origination tools out of sight while doing treatment. Edit via Window>Workspace>Manage Workspaces.

30 Production accuracy

Some of the tricks Illustrator can perform during the concept phase may not work well enough for production. You can create a photographic rendering of a package without bringing it into Photoshop, but features like opacity masks may not produce correctly or even show up accurately at the proofing stage.

31 Avoid overload

Beware of overloading your Illustrator documents with files that are too high-resolution to work with easily. A good rule of thumb is to work on top of files that have been saved at a maximum size of 150dpi for speed and ease when exporting and saving.

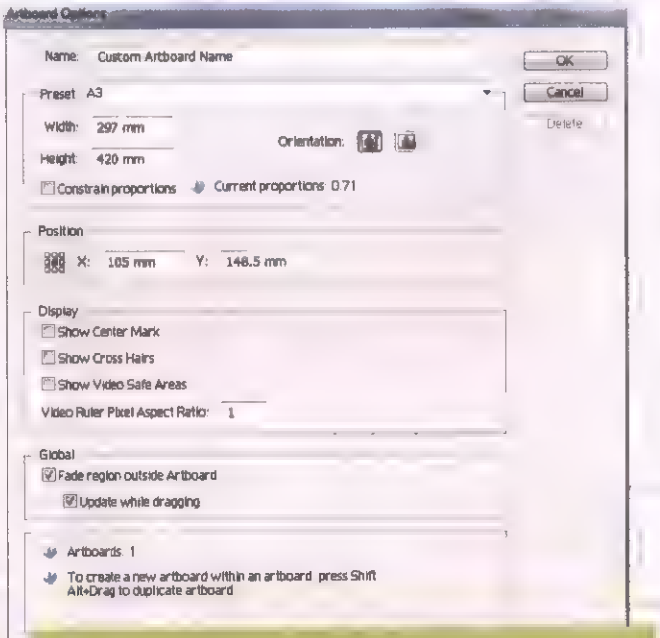
32 Notes on a new layer

As well as placing dielines on separate layers, you should also put any annotations you might want to add later on to a dieline – such as labelling front panels or flaps – onto another layer with a clear name (e.g. 'Notes') to ensure it's easy to show or hide these annotations as required.

33 Zoom out of all artboards

Most designers are well aware that Ctrl/Cmd+0 zooms in or out of the page being worked on, fitting it to the screen. Less well-known is the fact that Ctrl/Cmd+Alt+0 fits everything to the screen and therefore zooms out to display all artboards (CS4 onwards). Don't confuse this with Ctrl/Cmd+Alt/Opt+0, the shortcut for browsing in Bridge.

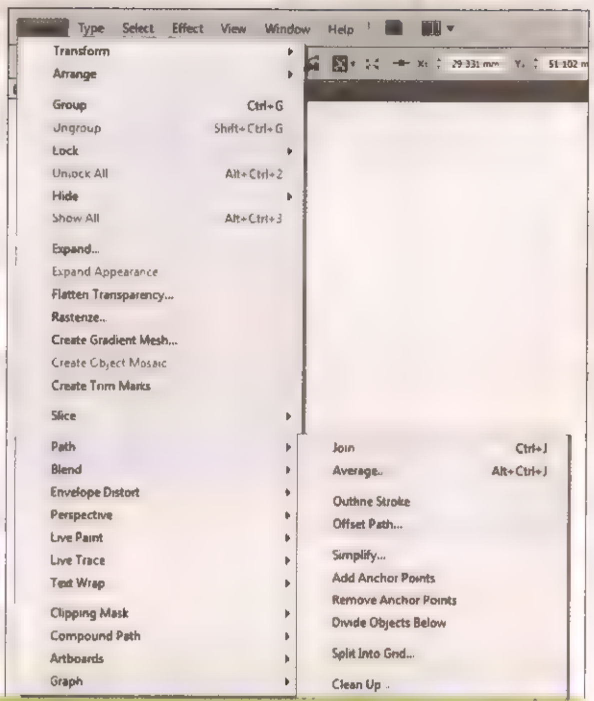
→



Name: Custom Artboard Name
Preset: A3
Width: 297 mm
Height: 420 mm
☐ Constrain proportions
Current proportions: 0.71
Position
X: 105 mm
Y: 148.5 mm
Display
☐ Show Center Mark
☐ Show Cross Hairs
☐ Show Video Safe Areas
Video Ruler Pixel Aspect Ratio: 1
Global
☑ Fade region outside Artboard
☑ Update while dragging
Artboards: 1
To create a new artboard within an artboard, press Shift
Alt+Drag to duplicate artboard

34 CUSTOM ARTBOARD NAMES

CS5 lets you give multiple artboards (added in CS4) individual custom names. Either select the Artboard tool (Shift+O) and type inside the Name field of the Control panel, or double-click the tool to call up the Artboard Options dialogue box. Exported files will retain the relevant custom reference.


Type
Select
Effect
View
Window
Help
X: 29.331 mm
Y: 51.102 m
Transform
Arrange
Group Ctrl+G
Ungroup Shift+Ctrl+G
Lock
Unlock All Alt+Ctrl+2
Hide
Show All Alt+Ctrl+3
Expand...
Expand Appearance
Flatten Transparency...
Rasterize...
Create Gradient Mesh...
Create Object Mosaic
Create Trim Marks
Slice
Path
Blend
Envelope Distort
Perspective
Live Paint
Live Trace
Text Wrap
Clipping Mask
Compound Path
Artboards
Graph
Join Ctrl+J
Average... Alt+Ctrl+J
Outline Stroke
Offset Path...
Simplify...
Add Anchor Points
Remove Anchor Points
Divide Objects Below
Split Into Grid...
Clean Up...

35 ADD BLEEDS WITH OFFSET PATH

Once you've got a packaging net set up, using the Offset Path tool is the quickest way to add bleed – handy for working with unusual shapes. You can do this via Object>Path>Offset Path and you'll generally find that 3mm is sufficient but, as always, be sure to double-check with your printer.

36 Copy and rotate

As Illustrator currently lacks a Rotate View tool, you can't rotate your work without actually altering the file. To avoid constant spinning, it's helpful to duplicate a file, place a copy beside or below what you're working on, and turn it upside down so you see each side the right way up.

37 Align to Key Objects

To align or distribute several objects to one specific Key Object (without this object moving, say), select the objects to be aligned and click once (no shortcut keys needed) on your designated Key Object before aligning or distributing via the Align or Control panels. A second click turns the Key Object off again.

38 Strata's Enfold 3D CX

This plug-in (www.bit.ly/Enfold_3D_CX) is a handy app that can be used to turn 2D artwork into folded 3D designs. It can be used to define die-cut lines and folds, and mock up a visual that you can then spin round in order to impress clients.

39 Increase tracking precision

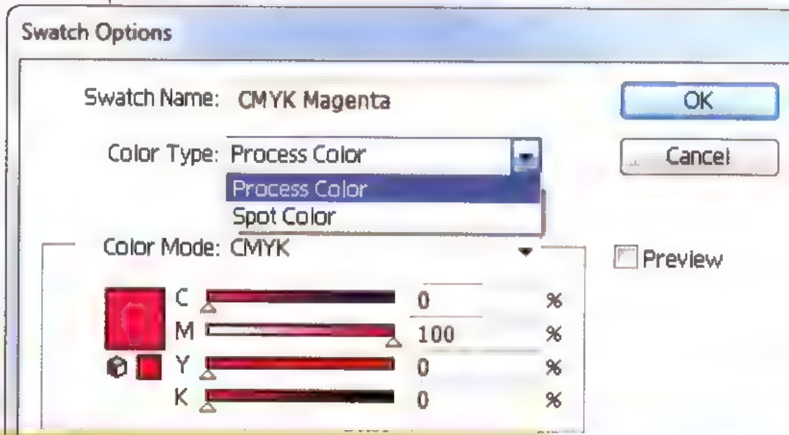
If you find that Illustrator's default setting for tracking, 20/1000 em per click, isn't sufficiently precise, edit the default value rather than making ad-hoc changes to tracking settings. Go to Edit>Preferred>Type and enter your preferred setting. Using the Type options, you can also reset other default values, including leading and baseline shift.

40 EskoArtwork DeskPack

EskoArtwork has produced a great range of pre-press tools for packaging designers working in Illustrator. While prices run into the thousands for the more expensive modules in the EskoArtwork DeskPack (www.esko.com/deskpack), the tools at the cheaper end of the price-range include Dynamic Panels, Preflight and White Underprint.

41 Hide selections

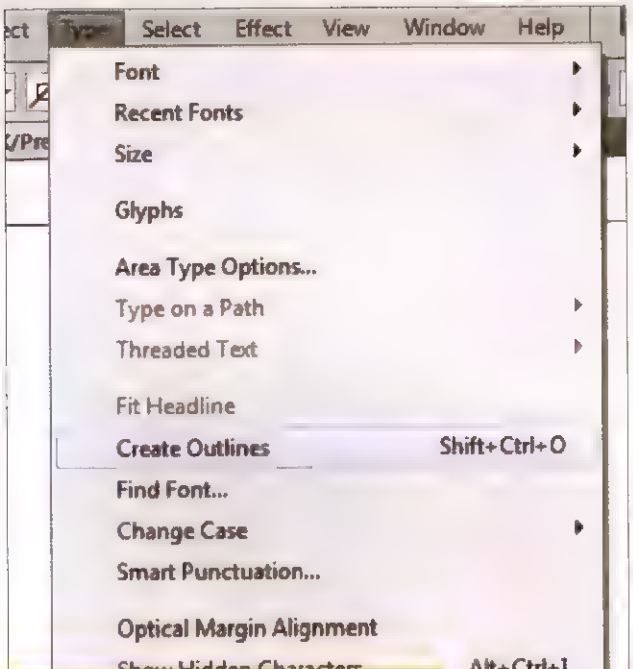
Using Ctrl/Cmd+3 to hide a selection is a great non-destructive method for moving an object out of your way to access whatever's behind it – you don't risk losing the object as you would if you cut it and then accidentally cleared the clipboard. Use Ctrl/Cmd+Alt+Opt+3 to show/unhide your work.


Swatch Options
OK
Cancel
Process Color
Spot Color
☐ Preview

Swatch Name: CMYK Magenta
Color Type: Process Color
Color Mode: CMYK
C 0 %
M 100 %
Y 0 %
K 0 %

42 QUICK COLOUR CONVERSION

You can easily convert spot colours to process colours without needing to go into Illustrator's Print dialogue options. Within the Swatches panel, double-click the colour you want to convert, which brings up the Swatch Options dialogue box, and choose from the Process and Spot Colour options in the Colour Type drop-down menu.



43 TEXT TO OUTLINES

Although hitting Select All (Ctrl/Cmd+A) and using Type>Create Outlines (Ctrl/Cmd+Shift+O) to convert text to outlines will ensure that your text prints correctly, as text on packaging may be subject to last-minute changes – such as to ingredient lists on food packing. De-select copy that's liable to change, rather than rendering all text uneditable.

44 FoldUP! 3D

Use FoldUP! 3D (www.bit.ly/Fold_up_3D) for a quick digital preview of folded packaging designs – an add-on that's highly useful for modelling your designs, it works with any version of Illustrator. FoldUP! 3D lets you observe the folding process stage by stage, and view your mock-ups from any angle.

45 Save, save, and save again

When working on numerous versions of a packaging design, it's all too easy to forgo regular saves. Whereas InDesign salvages unsaved files if the programme crashes, Illustrator currently lacks a similar auto-recovery feature. So if the programme – or your whole system – crashes, you'll lose any unsaved changes.

Thanks to... Mark Armstrong at Blue Marlin, Duncan Eldridge at Honey Creative, Julien Pons, Andy Gutowski at Object 9, Blair Thomson at Believe In, Juan Padraza at Smith & Milton, Mark Teisler-Goldsmith at Dragon Rouge, Daniel Gross at aNEW, Barry Darnell at Made By Analogue

46 VectorScribe

Can't seem to find the BetterHandles plug-in? Astute Graphics has bought Nineblock Software's IP and absorbed its products into new plug-in VectorScribe (www.bit.ly/VectorScribe). A trial version is included with this magazine's free disc. BetterHandles makes it easier to work with Bezier curve handles, has now been turned into the PathScribe tool within VectorScribe

47 Masked improvements

Masking is much more intuitive in CS5. Previously, it would still be possible to select placed images outside of the actual masked area – a potential catalyst for chaos if you were using multiple makes and images. There's need to shy away from it now: what you grab is what you get.

48 Back up custom workspaces

Don't just save your custom workspaces, back them up outside of your machine – for example on an external flash drive or using data cloud storage. Aside from being able to recover them if needed, having them stored externally will also enable you to access your settings from other computers.

49 Stop auto-expansion

In some versions of Illustrator, using Pathfinder to select images makes them expand automatically so that you lose the original data. To stop this from happening and ensure a non-destructive workflow, simply hold down Alt/Opt before clicking the Select tool, and the object won't expand automatically.

50 Trace handwriting by hand

While you can use Object>Live Trace to trace images and convert to vector artwork, avoid relying on this automated option when introducing handwritten elements that need to be vector-based. Instead, always trace manually from scans, point by point, and then adjust as needed to suit the artwork.

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DEEP INSIDE THE CREATIVE PROCESS: In-depth video diaries reveal how ilovedust creates awe inspiring mural installations
– Surreal mythology and cartoon capers Love them or hate them, these are the illustration styles to watch this year
– Finland in fashion Laura Laine throws open the doors of her Helsinki studio

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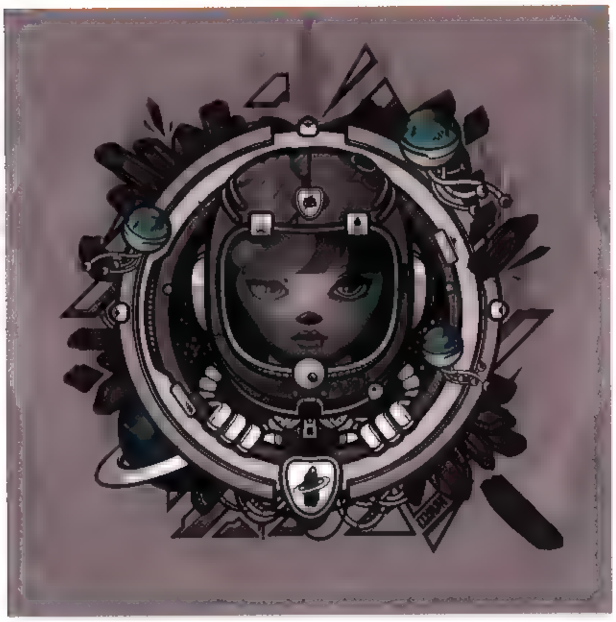
myfavouritemagazines.co.uk/design

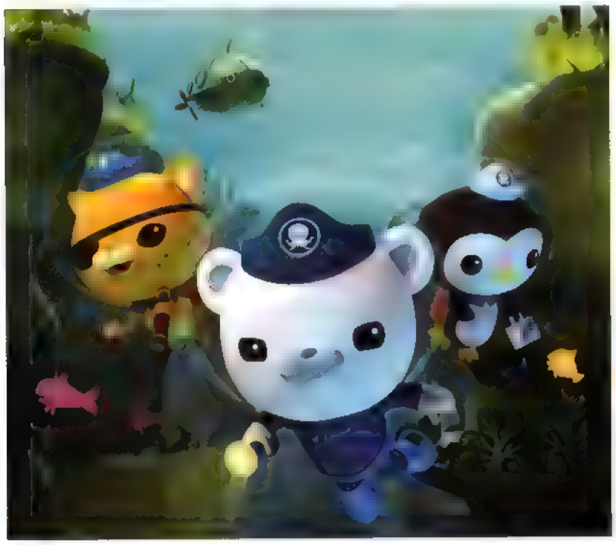
Illustrator Essentials

Get inspiration from – and learn the secrets of – the true masters of Illustrator...



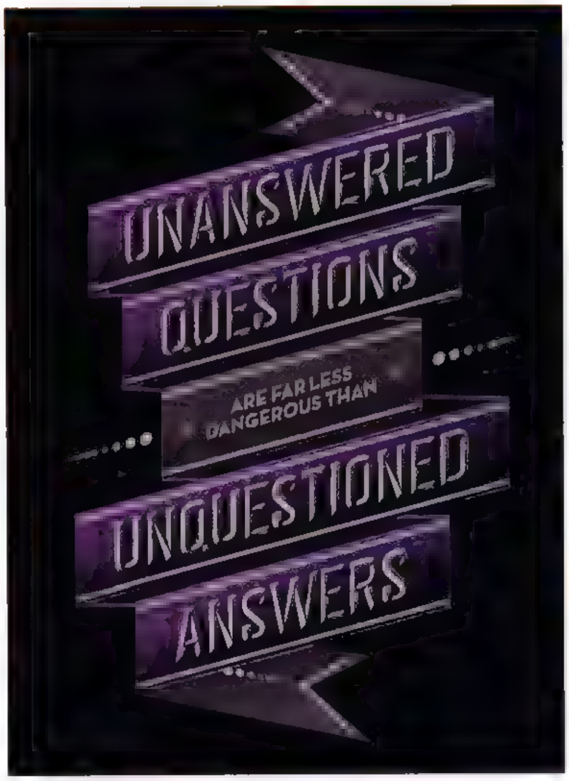
JARED NICKERSON **150**

The illustrator and BloodSweatVector co-founder discusses blending the cute with the grotesque, and why he's most at home working with characters



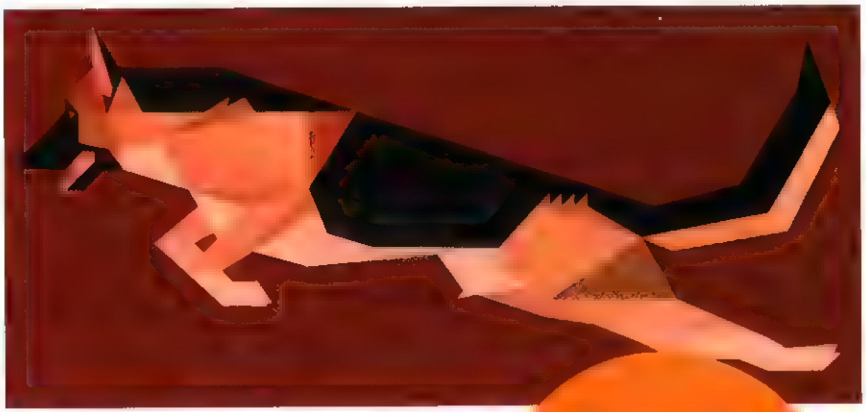
MEOMI **138**

Studio Meomi hit the big time with its Octonauts characters – and that was just the beginning for founders Vicki Wong and Michael Murphy



STEVEN BONNER **144**

The award-winning designer and illustrator explains his creative process and how he utilises Illustrator to create his striking images



ROB BAILEY **156**

Designer Rob Bailey is moving up in the world of illustration. He explains why he's most satisfied by the simple things in life

SEE A HUGE SHOWCASE OF ILLUSTRATOR TALENT ON PAGE 162

Meomi

Studio Meomi hit the big time with its Octonauts characters – and that was just the beginning for founders Vicki Wong and Michael Murphy

Vicki Wong and Michael Murphy
Husband-and-wife team Wong and Murphy are the brains behind Meomi, a creative studio with a client list that includes the likes of Google, *Time out* and Panasonic. They're also the team behind children's characters the Octonauts.
www.meomi.com

"Designing a character is like trying to get to know someone," says Vicki Wong, one half of Meomi. "You ask them where they come from, what they like to do, what they like to eat, who their friends are and so on. A character's emerging personality and interests will often influence how we progress with the design."

She makes it sound easy but then, as soon becomes apparent while talking to the duo, Meomi isn't one to blow its own trumpet. Consisting solely of Wong and creative partner Michael Murphy, the studio is probably best known for creating the *Octonauts* children's book series, which follows the journeys of a hardy group of animals as they roam under the ocean looking for fun and adventure. With five books currently produced, the exploits of Captain Barnacles Bear, Kwazii Kitten, Peso Penguin and more have also become familiar to pre-schoolers worldwide via an animated TV series produced by Chorion and Brown Bag Films.

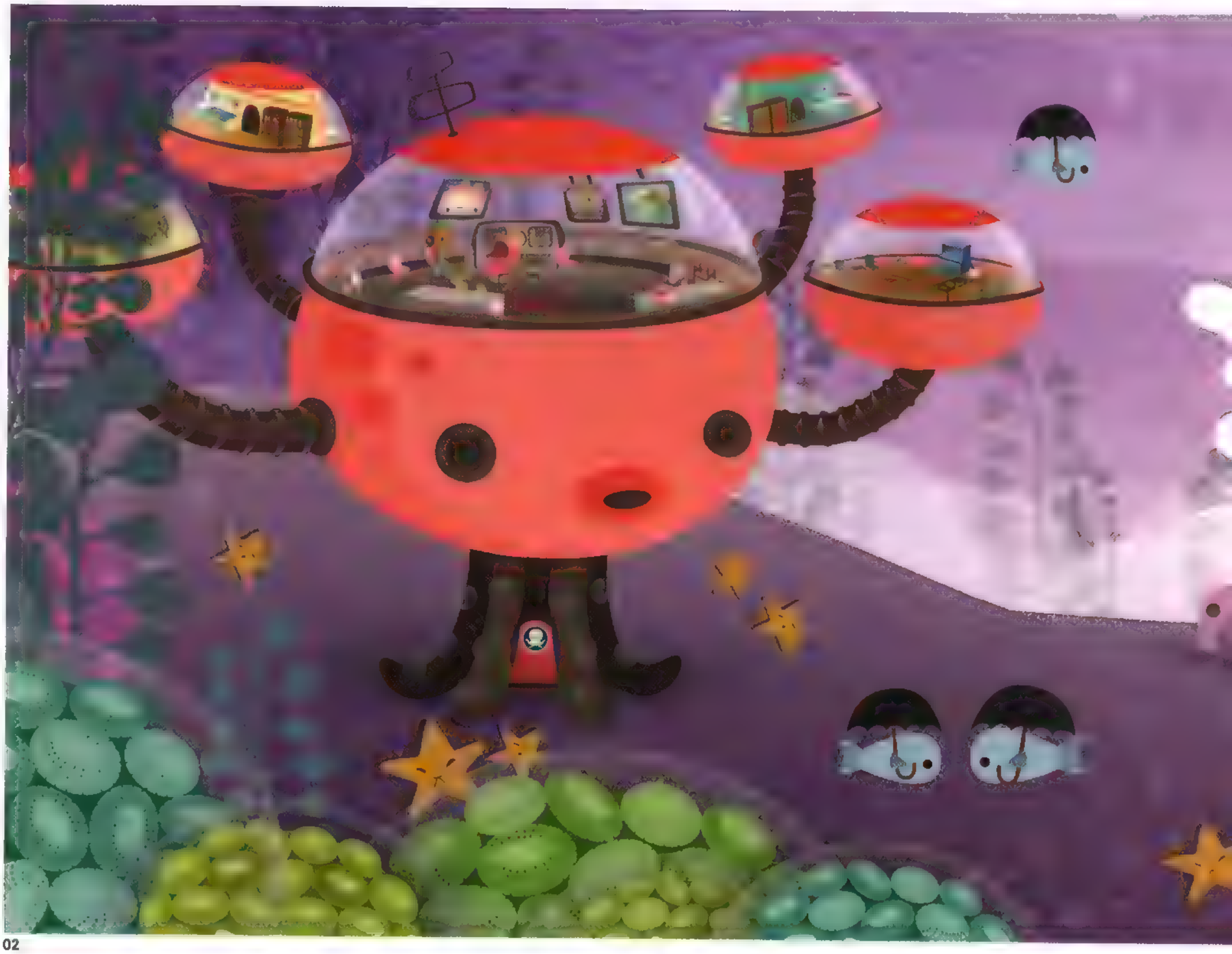
It's safe to say that Meomi had no idea that the Octonauts would become such a huge global hit when Wong and Murphy first designed them. "They just started out as desktop wallpaper calendars in 2004," explains Wong. "We created them as downloadables to celebrate our love of the underwater world, fun sci-fi tech and cute critters. Each month, we introduced new characters and gave a glimpse into their adventures."

Thus Captain Barnacles was born just because they wanted to have a polar bear character, Kwazii was inspired by Wong's one-eyed pet cat, and "Professor Inkling was the last character introduced in December, after we'd fallen in love with Dumbo the octopus from the BBC's *Blue Planet* series." In 2005, they were approached by a US publisher to create a picture book, and as they already had several new stories in mind, they readily agreed.

Since then, the hugely positive response to the Octonauts has almost overwhelmed Meomi. "With our books, we've just tried to come up with stories that we'd enjoy, so it's really humbling that so many people have allowed us to share our strange and funny stories with them," says Wong. "On a daily basis, we're in awe at the kindness and creativity of all the Octonauts fans sharing their enthusiasm with us via online social networks." Said fans have created cakes, costumes, craft toys and more, all based on the now-iconic characters.

→

01 Captain Barnacles Bear, Kwazii Kitten and Peso penguin **strike out to explore the depths**



02

→ The two halves of Meomi met through "a shared love of cutaway drawings, Barbapapa, and squirrels," according to Wong. In 2000 she was living and working in Copenhagen as an art director and designer, while Murphy worked in motion graphics and new media. Having seen one of Wong's drawings on her website, Murphy sent her an introductory email, which led to a long exchange of drawings and more missives. By 2002, they had decided to work together under the name Meomi (named after a particularly excited noise a cat they knew liked to make), and nine years later they are "a little husband and wife studio focusing on doing projects for fun clients, writing and illustrating stories, seeking out the whimsical and the delightful."

It's a sweet story and one that perfectly fits with Meomi's worldview. Its characters are cute, cuddly and very slightly odd, without ever tipping into the realms of tweeness, and they have that useful quality of appealing to both adults and children. Meomi's characters don't look as if they belong to some mythical Victorian age: they reference thoroughly modern themes and possess the sort of pop culture sass that clicks with viewers.

A good case in point is Meomi's designs for the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics – a massive project which, says Wong, they would never have dreamed of pursuing off their own bat. As it was, the event's creative director Leo Obstbaum invited them to submit a portfolio. "We could tell he had a real passion for contemporary character design, loved vinyl toys and was fully aware of the design aesthetic and creativity of what's happening 'now'," explains Wong. "He was interested in us because of our style and approach to design."

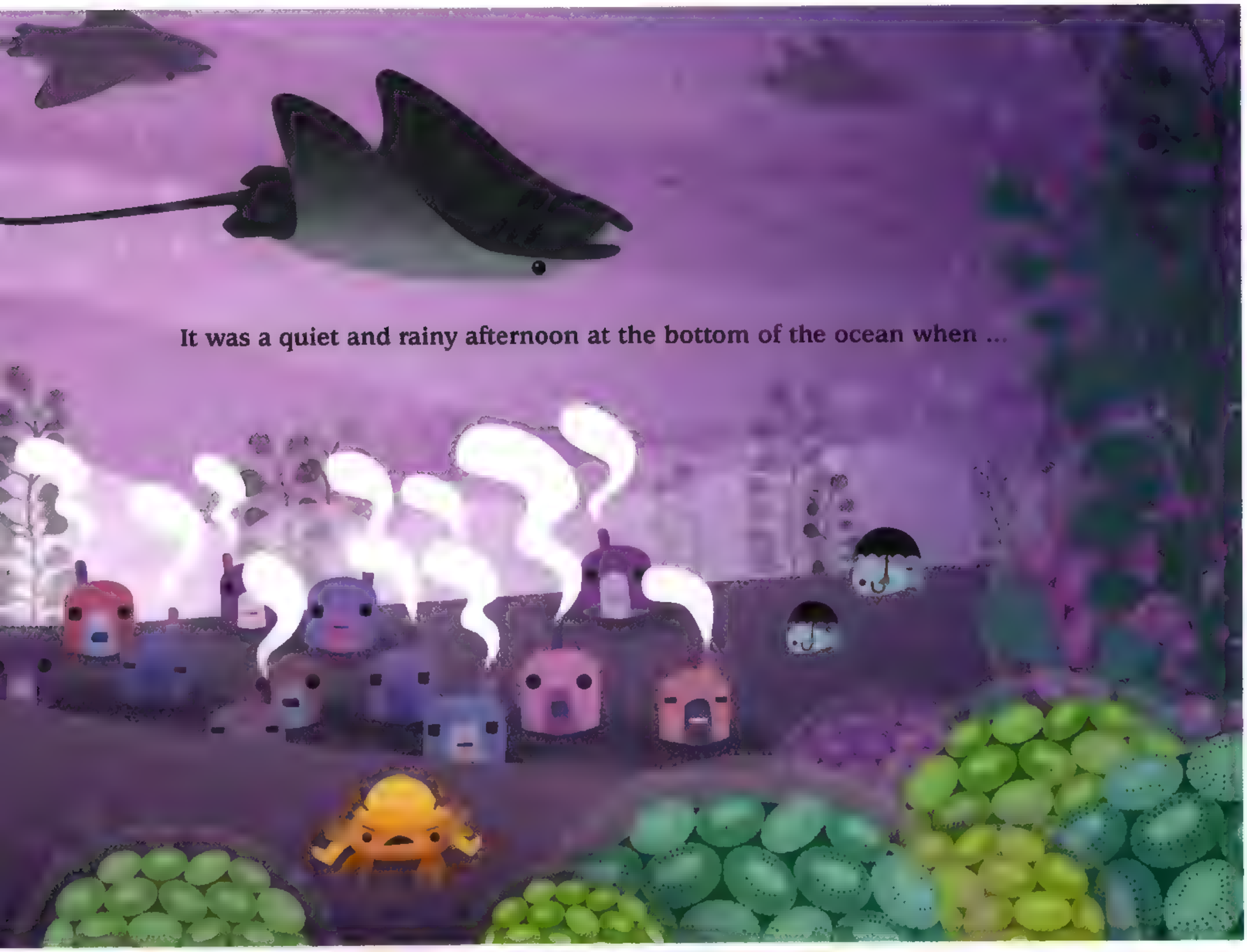
Eventually Meomi managed to find itself as one of two finalists – out of 177 original entrants – hired to create concept designs for characters based on the themes of the games: multiculturalism, sustainability and sportsmanship. It developed 10 designs in total, five for the Olympics and five for the Paralympics.

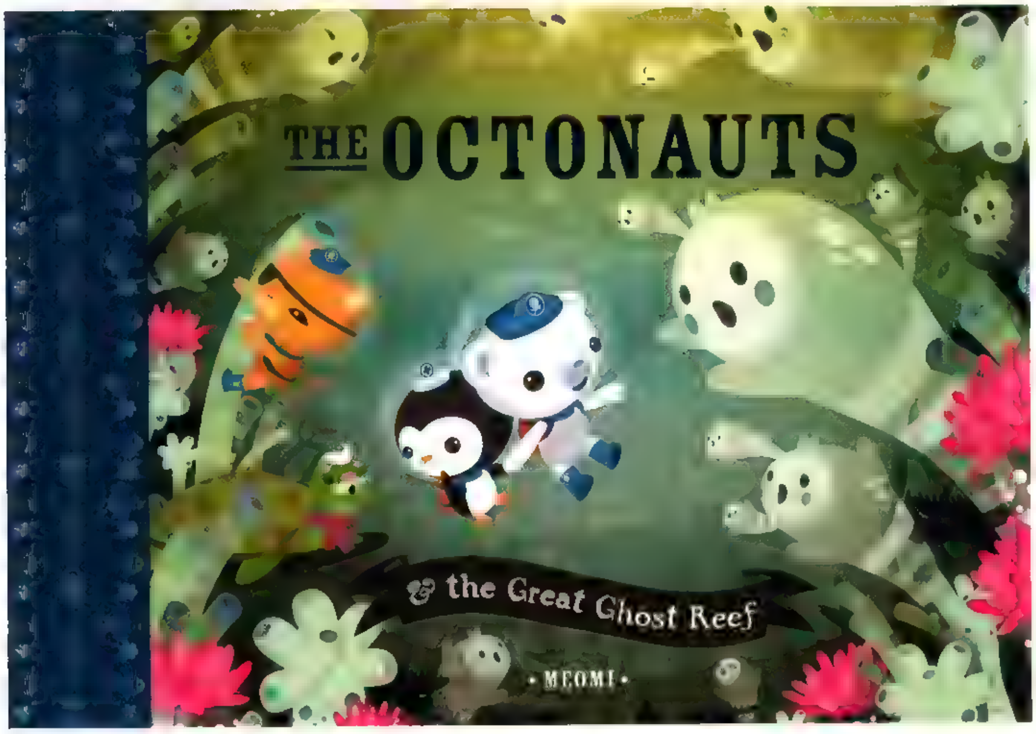
"Each character had to come with its own story," Wong continues. "We think that our work as children's book authors and illustrators probably gave us some advantage, as we had experience developing not only what the characters look like, but also their personalities – their likes and dreams and how they relate to each other. It seems they liked our work, and the final mascots came from those concepts."

The mascots were Miga, Quatchi, Sumi and his sidekick Mukmuk. All four were based on local legends – Quatchi, for instance, is a sasquatch – with names similarly derived from local languages. It was important for Meomi that the characters embodied elements of what it means to be Canadian or British Columbian. That meant interpreting the ancient myths in terms that kids would appreciate, as well as suggesting the idea that every culture has similar themes and myths in its own make-up.

Wong says that, far from being subjected to endless design-by-committee meetings, there were very few refinements from the original concept work to the final designs, bar some colour changes. "We did have to work in complete secrecy for about a year, though," she adds.

"Until the reveal of the mascots, we weren't allowed to tell anyone we were involved with about the project. Every file was →


It was a quiet and rainy afternoon at the bottom of the ocean when ...

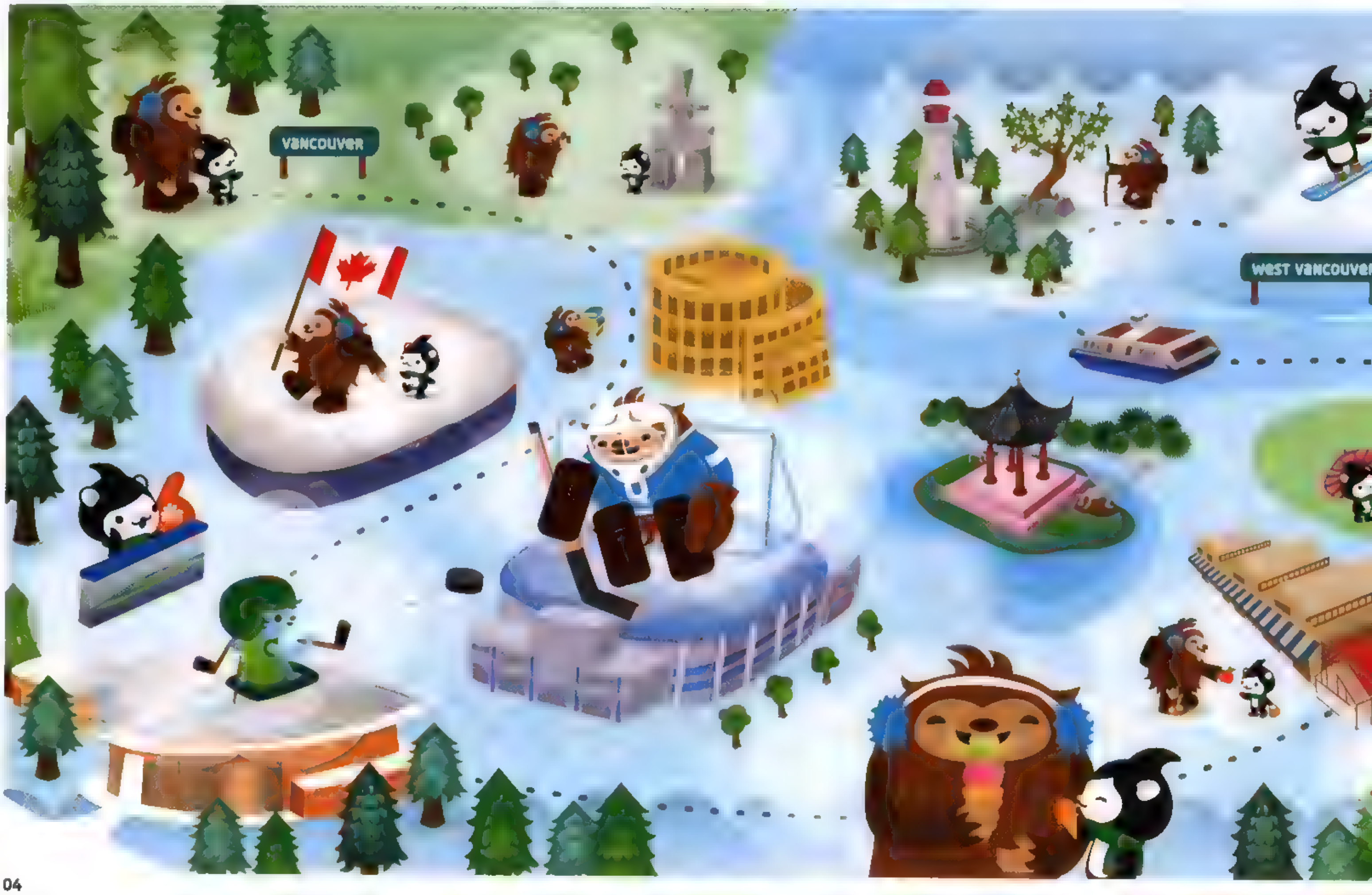

THE OCTONAUTS
& the Great Ghost Reef
• MEOMI •

03

02 Wong and Murphy share **writing and illustrating duties** equally on the *Octonauts* books

03 *The Octonauts and the Great Ghost Reef* is the fourth book about **Meomi's now famous characters**

04 Miga, Quatchi, Sumi and Mukmuk – the 2010 Winter Olympics mascots – get their game on in an **illustrative overview** of the events



04

→ triple-passworded and we had to live a bit like hermits as there were journalists frequently trying to scope out leaks."

One thing that might not be obvious from Meomi's portfolio is the amount of animation it creates in addition to character design. In fact, says Wong, "for the last few years, we've actually worked on just as much animation as illustration. We created lots of animations of the 2010 Olympic mascots, for instance. For the *Octonauts* TV series, we animated Kwazii's 'fantasy' sequences, as well as the various computer screens that the characters use to teach undersea creature facts."

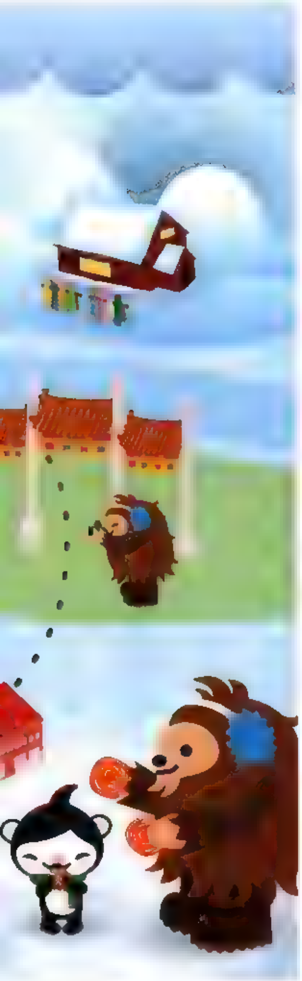
They've also undertaken projects for larger commercial clients such as Google, for which they designed various characters for themes in iGoogle and Gmail. That particular gig came about through their design friends at Cuban Council. "Google was great to work with – it was quite open to exploring different types of visuals and was flexible with letting us develop themes that interested us. Teahouse Fox, one of the Google characters, has a special place in our hearts – and his own Facebook fan page."

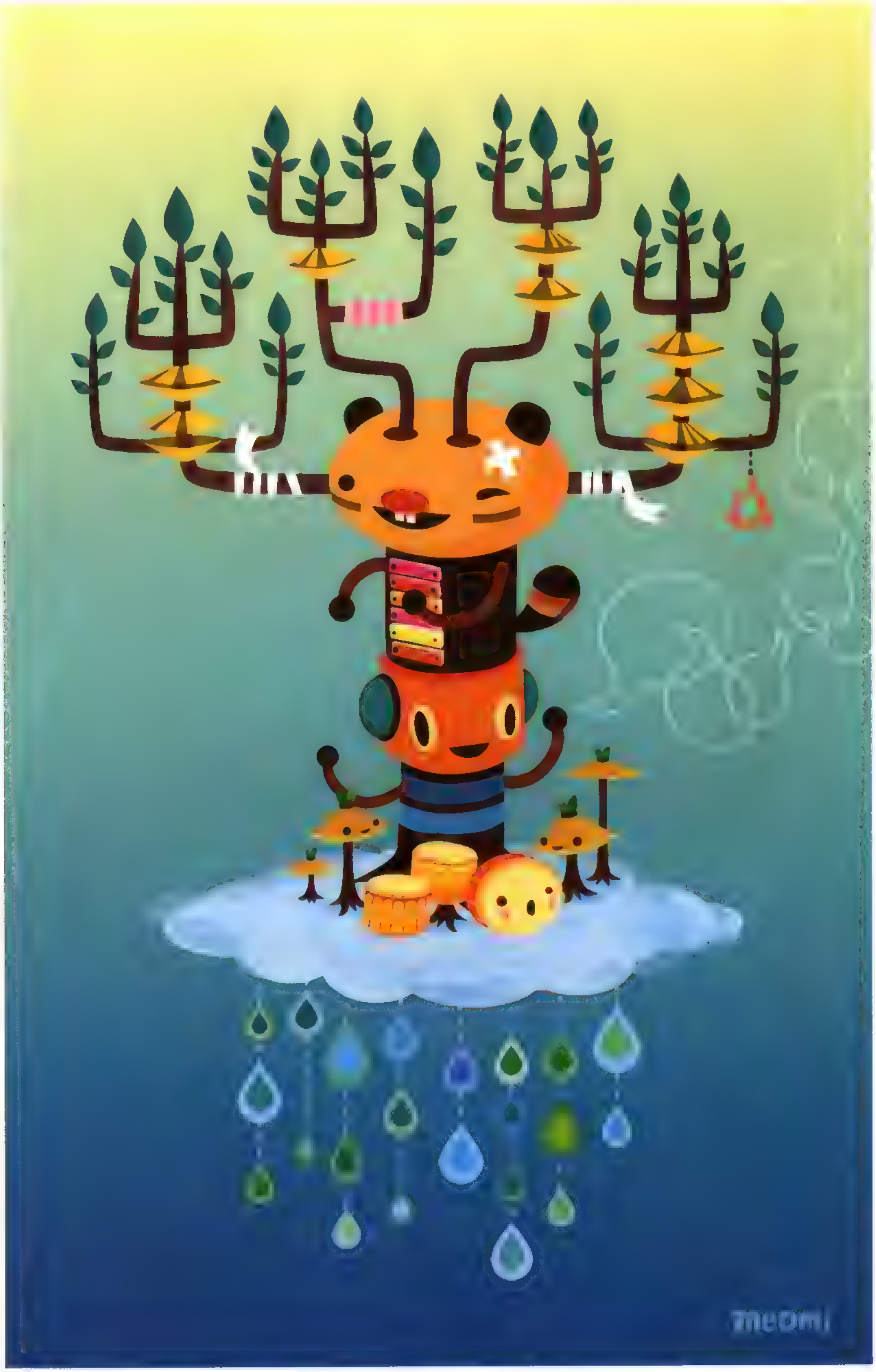
In some ways, it seems as if Meomi inhabits its own parallel world filled with its fantasy creatures. Digital technology doesn't seem to particularly interest them beyond its obvious uses – when we ask what they use to create their characters, Wong simply says: "Sticks, acorns and sloths" – and the fact that she works in Vancouver while Murphy is in Los Angeles doesn't particularly faze them. "It's funny actually," she says of this long-distance collaboration. "Even when we're in the same place, we often work the same way – via IM. We're constantly sending each other screenshots for feedback. As we work digitally, it's quick to send a file if one of us gets stuck and needs a fresh eye. We do also meet frequently in real life though."

In any case, the set-up clearly works. Series two of *Octonauts* is about to go into production, and the pair are also starting to work on new *Octonauts* books. With this and other recent work for the likes of *Rojo* magazine, EA's Club Pogo games and various character designs for corporate websites, Meomi have plenty more characters and worlds waiting to see the light of day.

"We hope in the future to be able to develop our analogue space to work on non-digital elements, too," adds Wong. "So, things like stop motion sets, sound design, music and photography. There are so many interesting mediums out there to explore."

05 Cloud Music, an **art print and T-shirt design** featuring the sort of one-off characters Meomi thrive on





05

01 (Opposite) This typographic piece, called Unanswered Questions, **was created using Illustrator** and designed for Quotes, a small, US-based T-shirt company

Steven Bonner

The award-winning designer and illustrator explains his creative process and how he utilises Illustrator to create his striking images

Steven Bonner
Designer, illustrator and typographer Bonner works from his home studio just outside Stirling, Scotland. He studied graphic design and worked as a designer and art director for various design agencies before setting up on his own in 2009.
www.stevenbonner.com

For designer, illustrator and typographer Steven Bonner, inspiration for his work comes from his love of imagery made before the computer age. "I love hand-painted signage and all manner of lettering that comes from a craftsman's hand," he explains. "I try to emulate that in some way through my work. Computers can sometimes make things too clinical and I like the natural imperfections that work created by hand has. Even though I work mainly on my Mac, I try to infuse an element of handmade craft into what I do."

Working predominantly in Illustrator, although he also uses Photoshop and InDesign for textured finishing and page layouts respectively, crafting an image is what is important to Bonner. "I always begin my work with a sketch – a process that is hundreds of years old – but now, rather than picking up a brush to render the final piece, I use a Mac," he explains. "The process is the same, just the tools differ"

Bonner studied graphic design and worked in design agencies for a number of years before going solo in 2009. Since then he has gone on to become more of a creative all-rounder, exploring the worlds of illustration, pictorial and illustrated type, and typography. "When I set up on my own my original plan was to carry on solely with design-related clients, but within months I realised most of my work was coming from clients looking for illustrative pieces, mainly clothing companies who knew my hobby work from threadless.com and got in touch for T-shirt designs," he explains.

"Things evolved organically from there, with no real strategy. I just did what most independents do and took more-or-less what was offered," he continues. "However, after a while I became focused on the things that I wanted to pursue, and started gaining more editorial and advertising work."

Today Bonner is best known for his illustrated type and lettering, as well as his logo design – working for clients including Diesel, Penguin and *The New York Times*. His illustration style is clearly born out of his design background, in that he prefers to use as simple a shape as he can to get his message across. "I want the viewer to understand the image quickly, so it works as a piece of communication first →

UNANSWERED
QUESTIONS

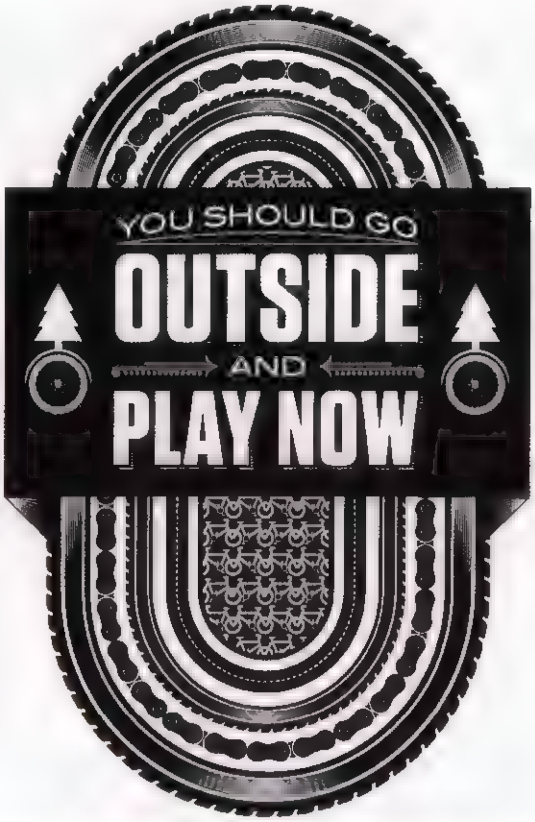
ARE FAR LESS
DANGEROUS THAN

UNQUESTIONED
ANSWERS

02 Part of the same range of Quotes tees as Unanswered Questions (page 145), Suspense was **inspired by old black-and-white thriller movies**

03 Shown here is a print **designed exclusively for sale at Print Xyndicate**. It is titled You Should Go Outside and Play Now and was created using Illustrator

04 This is a personal image entitled The Essentials. **It details the general items** that Bonner needs day-to-day, for both work and play



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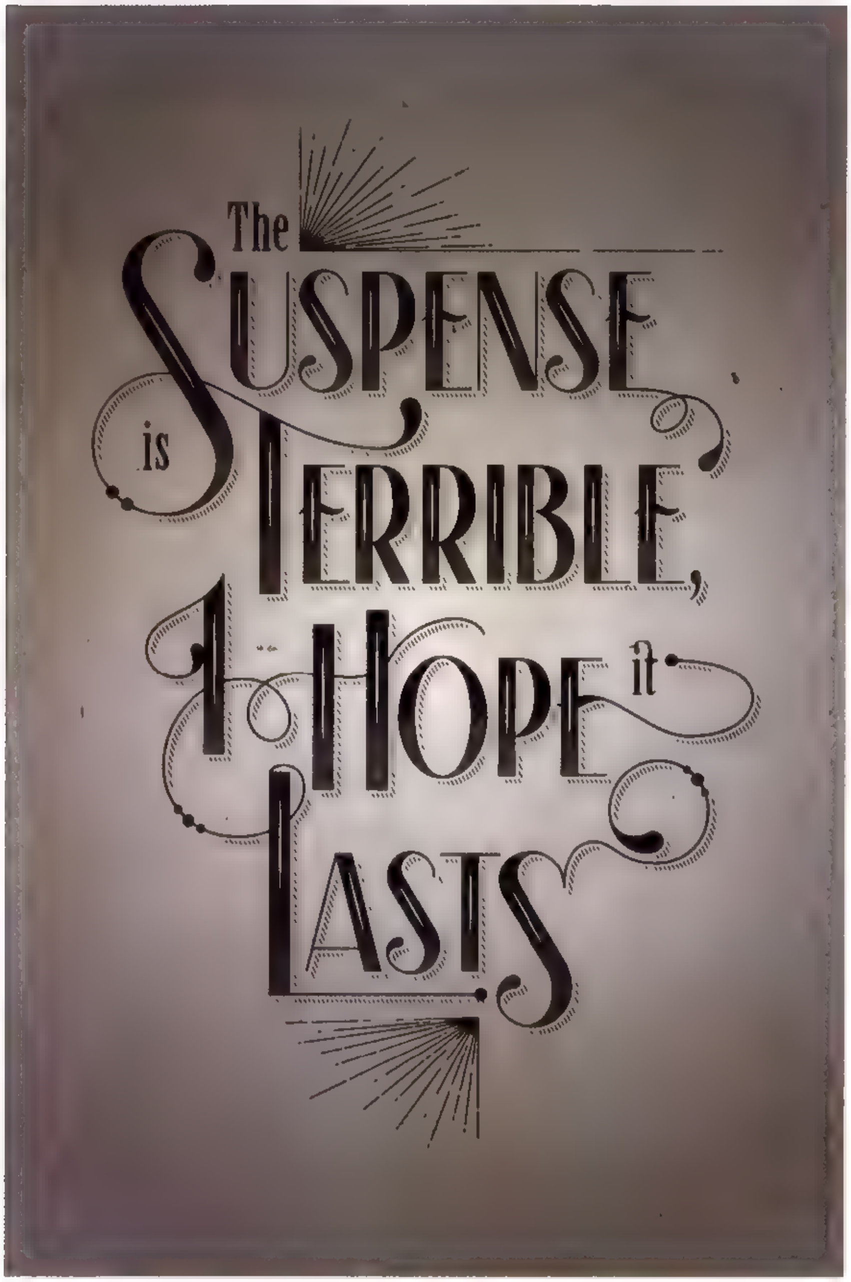

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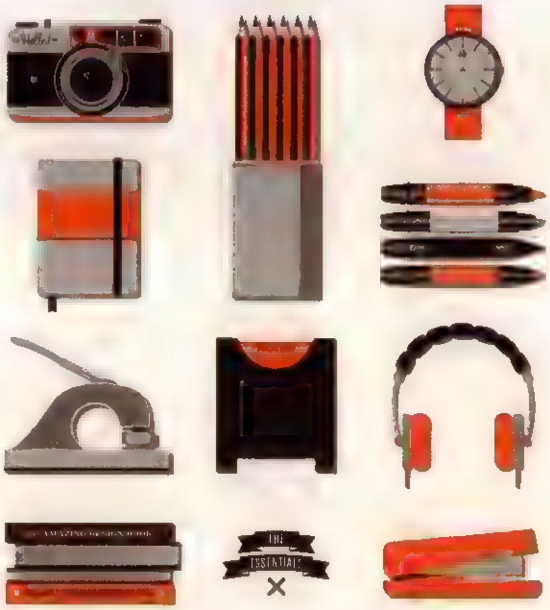


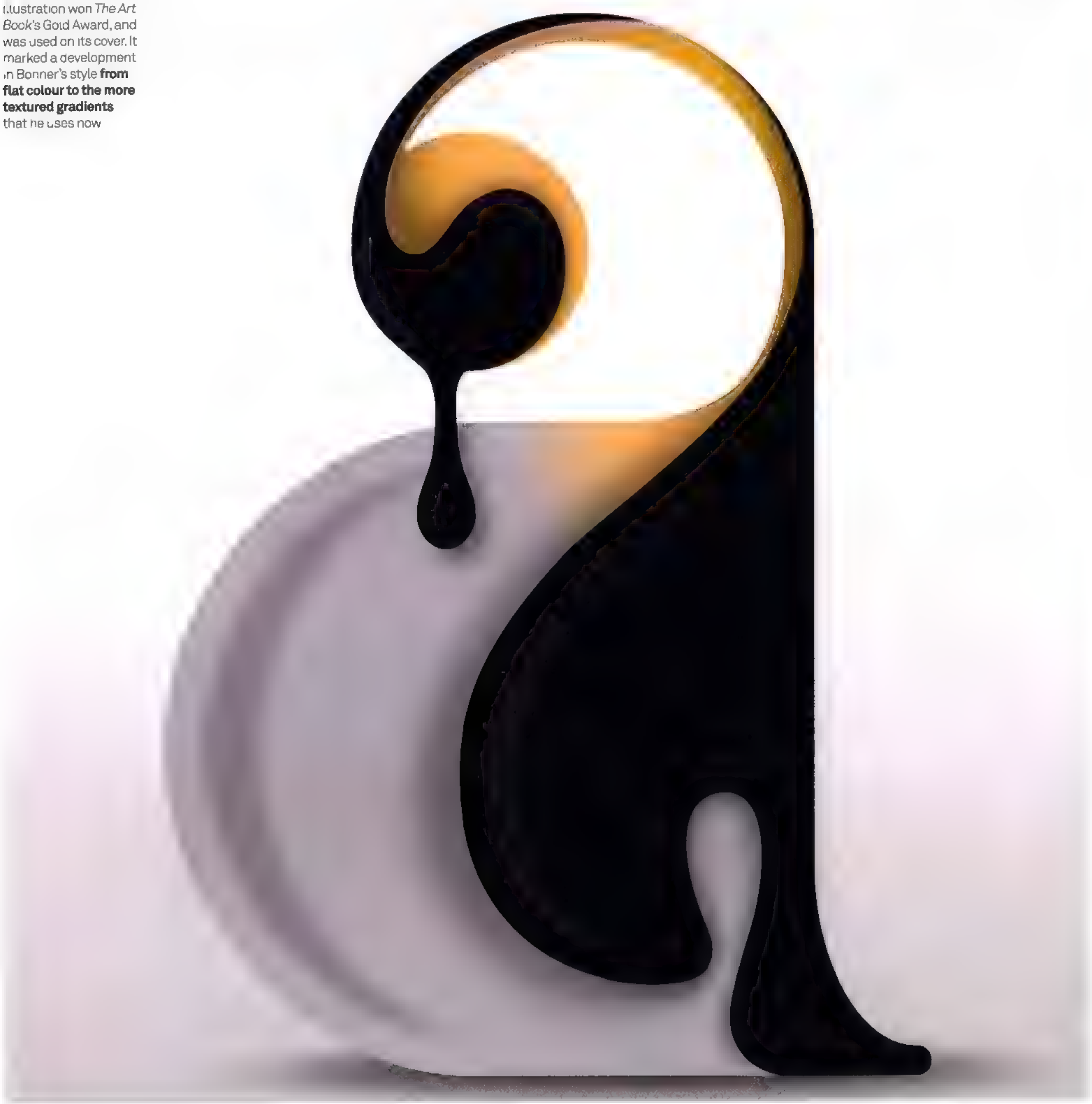
04

→ and foremost," he explains. "I'll embellish the image once I'm happy that it works on a basic level, but I try to keep everything simple – both in terms of colours and shapes."

Bonner's creative set-up comprises a pencil, paper, DSLR camera, iMac, Adobe CS5 (mainly Illustrator) and a Wacom Intuos3 graphics tablet – a fairly standard arrangement, but one that works well for his needs. Of course, Illustrator is the software tool of choice for many designers and illustrators for a number of different reasons, but it appeals specifically to Bonner because of its ability to produce scalable images, and for its intuitive nature. "As an everyday designer you need to be aware of where and how your work will be used further down the line – so logos need to be scalable and the same goes for type. Illustrator is perfect in that regard," Bonner believes. "It's also intuitive. There can be a bit of a learning curve to get proficient with its more in-depth tools but, in the main, it has a great 'pick up and play' feel about it that makes experimentation easy. I'll often be playing around with features I've never had cause to use and stumble across something that I can use as part of a new project. It promotes evolution."

Typically, Bonner's creative process begins with drawing pencil sketches, before moving into Illustrator for vector work and basic colouring. Final shading and texturing is usually completed in Photoshop. "Visually, I love the slick finish of vector curves and the crisp images that Illustrator produces," he explains. "As for specific tools, the Pathfinder palette is one

05 This pictorial type illustration won *The Art Book*'s Gold Award, and was used on its cover. It marked a development in Bonner's style **from flat colour to the more textured gradients** that he uses now



05

of the greatest developments ever. It's been there for years but I use it in almost everything I do, and my projects would take twice as long without it. Couple it with the standard Bézier curve tool and you've got pretty much all you need to start creating some great work.

"I'm very taken with the Width tool in Illustrator at the moment," he adds. "It makes flourish work much simpler than before, and as a workflow tool it cuts the time it takes to draw varying stress in lines by at least three quarters. Illustrator works for me because I'm very measured in my work and tend to use grids for more or less everything, including illustration," he continues. "By contrast though, I frequently ignore them when I think it's necessary. Too many designers are slaves to grids. For me a little imperfection gives a design character."

Bonner's illustrated type and logos have graced many a book, magazine, T-shirt and billboard, but one of his most significant pieces of work has to be his Gold Award-winning pictorial type illustration, which was used on the cover of *The Art Book* 2010: "I don't normally take on competition projects, but I had some down time and would only have been working on personal work anyway so it all seemed to fit nicely," he explains. "There was essentially no brief, so I decided to experiment a little. To this end this image marked a definite evolution in style for me, where I developed a lot of the techniques that I now use daily."

It was during the creation of this project that Bonner started to use the technique of digitally airbrushing stencils in Illustrator, then using them to mask areas in Photoshop to →

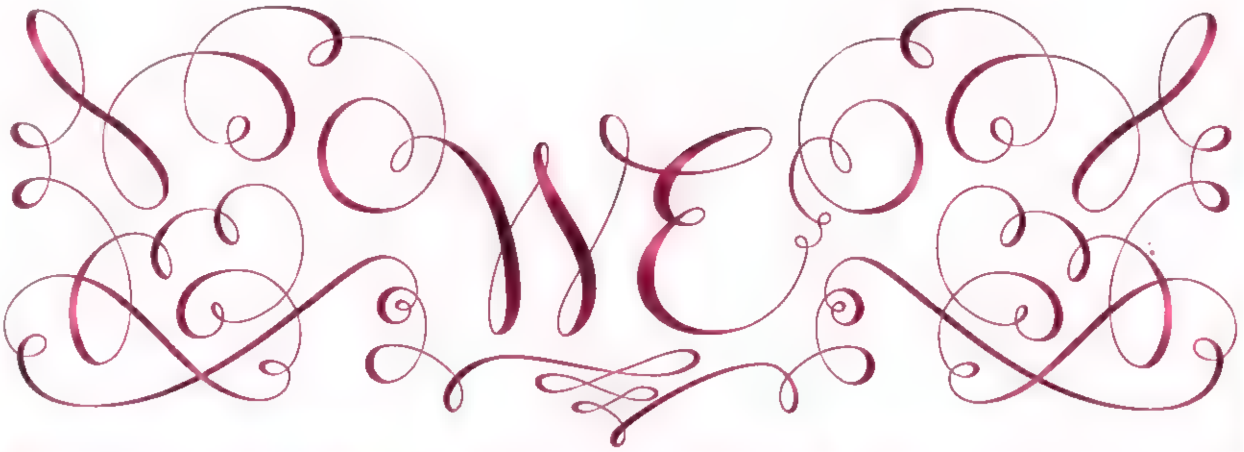
FEATURES
QUICK GUIDES
TUTORIALS
SHOWCASE

06 This illustrated lettering, The Royal We, was created for *The New York Times*' On Language column. Its design was **inspired by regal crests and ribbon type** to show the use of the royal 'We' in everyday language

07 Santa's Day Job is a promotional image for an exhibition that Jelly, Bonner's agent in the UK, held at CHI&Partners last Christmas. Like much of his work, it was created using both **Illustrator and Photoshop**

08 This promotional image, entitled Believe and You Shall Achieve, was created by Bonner for Jelly as part of a promotional drive to **tie in with the London 2012 Olympics**

09 Bonner's editorial illustration for *The Ride Journal* demonstrates his **use of Illustrator's Warp tool** on the type, with final texturing done in Photoshop



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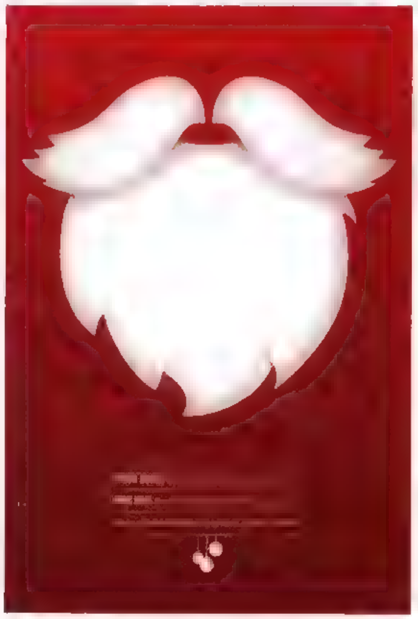

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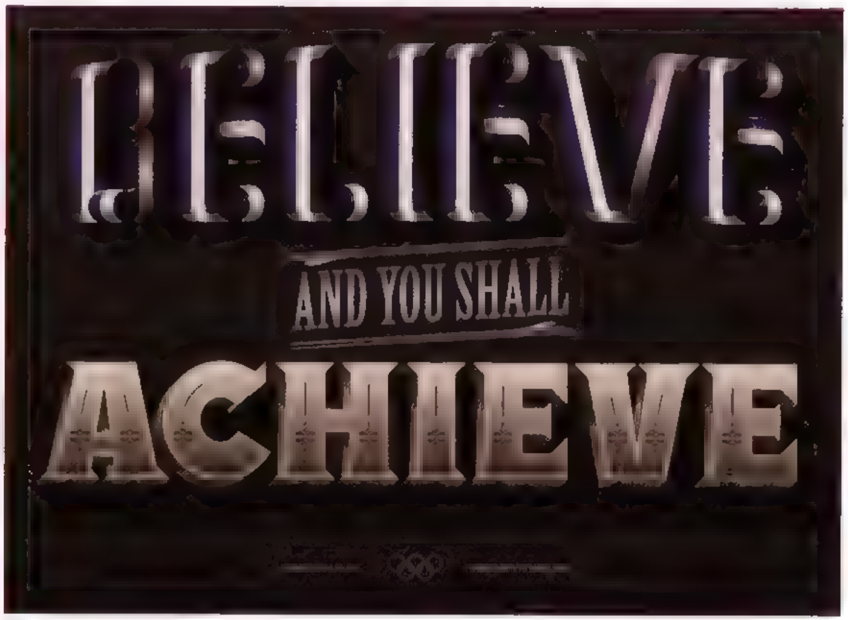

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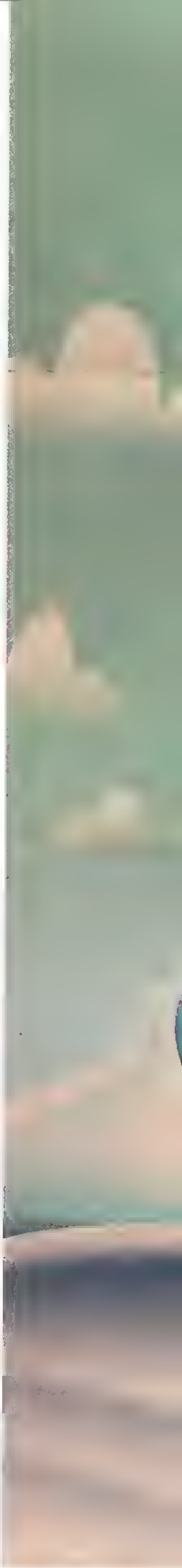
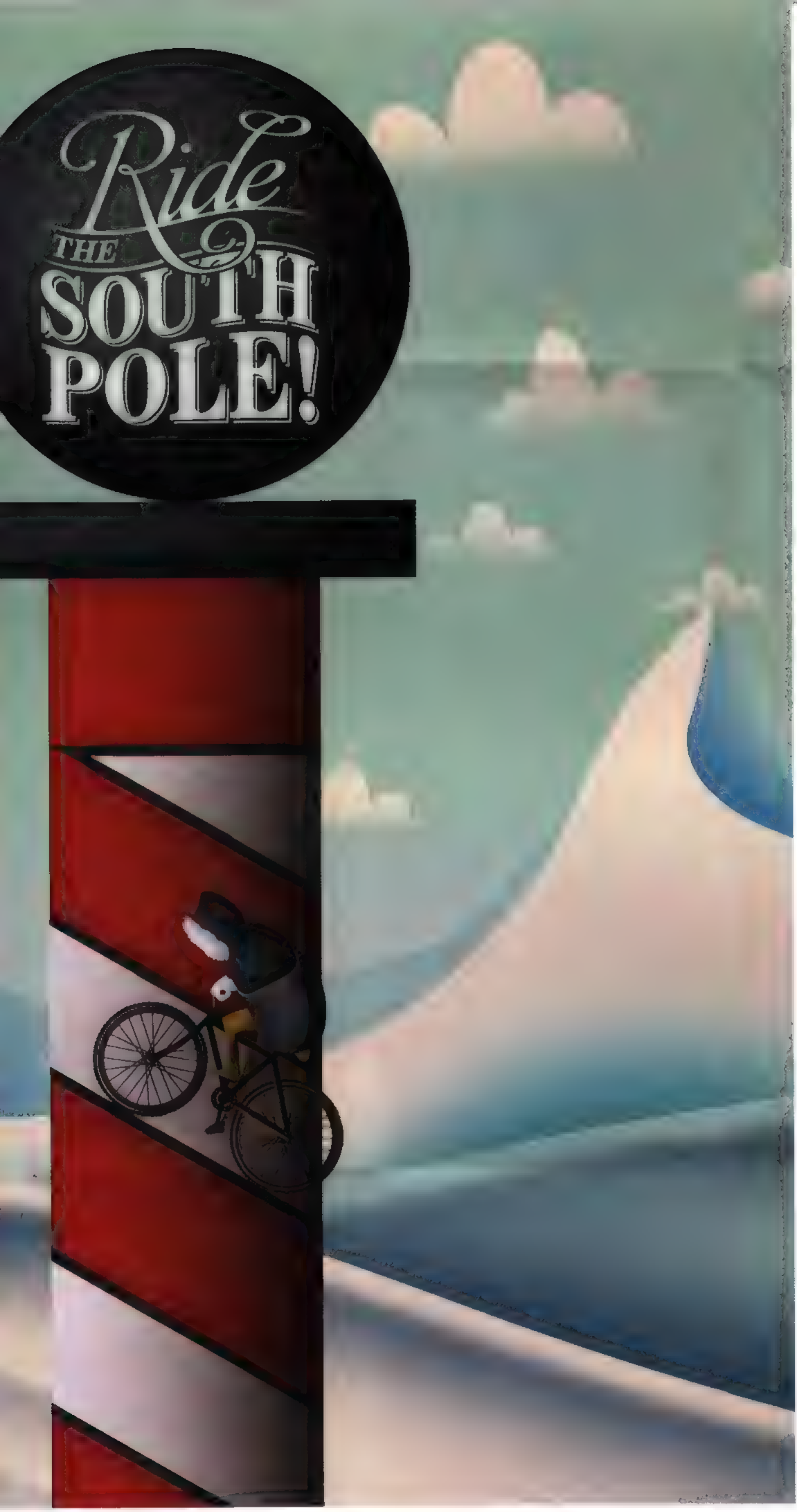


→ give a soft, diffused appearance to them. "I already had an image in my mind of the finished piece, and then it was just a case of figuring out the best and most efficient way to produce it," he explains. "I was very pleased with the results in that first piece, and it's a technique I now use regularly. It's really begun to define a lot of my work."

As well as his illustrated type, Bonner also works on and creates a significant amount of lettering – something he enjoys above all else. "Lettering has something that really satisfies every side of my creative persona," he explains. "If I'm feeling formal I can draw letters to classic proportions, measuring everything and abiding by the rules, and if I feel experimental there are a million ways to render a glyph. Lettering is endless and as long as people keep commissioning me I'll keep working."

Most recently Bonner has completed work for Tamdhu whisky, The New York Times, Nike and The British Heart Foundation. With more exciting client work on the way, Bonner is cementing himself as one of the most exciting British illustrators and letterers of recent times.



09

Bonner's pro tips for type and illustration

1 Design type using grids

For classic typographic forms, grids are invaluable for achieving consistent line widths and curves. You can set the size of your grid in the preferences for fine control. Be careful, though: if you're making italics, it pays to create your own bespoke guides rather than relying on Illustrator's basic vertical and horizontal lines. Similarly, use the grid to establish your baseline, x-height and so on early on

2 Slice up ellipses

Make use of Illustrator's basic toolset to create smooth curves, then cut and connect the shapes using the Scissors and Direct Selection tools rather than drawing them yourself. This method will create simple transitions for those less comfortable with Bézier curves

3 Smoother Bézier curves

Try to keep the distances of the curve's handles from the actual lines quite consistent, as it promotes smoother and more natural curves. If your handles are all different lengths then you're going to run into problems with your shape at some point. Also, try to keep the handles pointing along horizontal and vertical paths as much as possible as it gives you more control over consistency, which is paramount in lettering.

4 Pathfinder letterforms

This is invaluable for building shapes quickly before refining them later. You can build whole letters by combining or intersecting a few simple shapes. For example, use the Intersect option with a cycle and a rectangle to create a rudimentary serif that can be used again on each different letterform. Be aware of basic typographic rules and the properties of each individual glyph – one serif does not fit all.

5 Get more from colour

Make use of Illustrator's capacity for colour and transparency to lift a piece. You can add hyper-realistic shadows with falloff by combining gradients with opacity masks and create instant colour schemes with its Kuler integration. There are no quick tips to make your work better, but plenty of possibilities for you to realise what you have in your head and get it on screen or in print

Jared Nickerson

The illustrator and BloodSweatVector co-founder discusses blending the cute with the grotesque, and why he's most at home working with characters

Jared Nickerson
The Seattle-based illustrator operates under his Jthree Concepts studio name, working on a wide range of projects for clients including Nike, Adidas and Coca-Cola. He's also the co-founder of the BloodSweatVector online community
www.jthreeconcepts.com

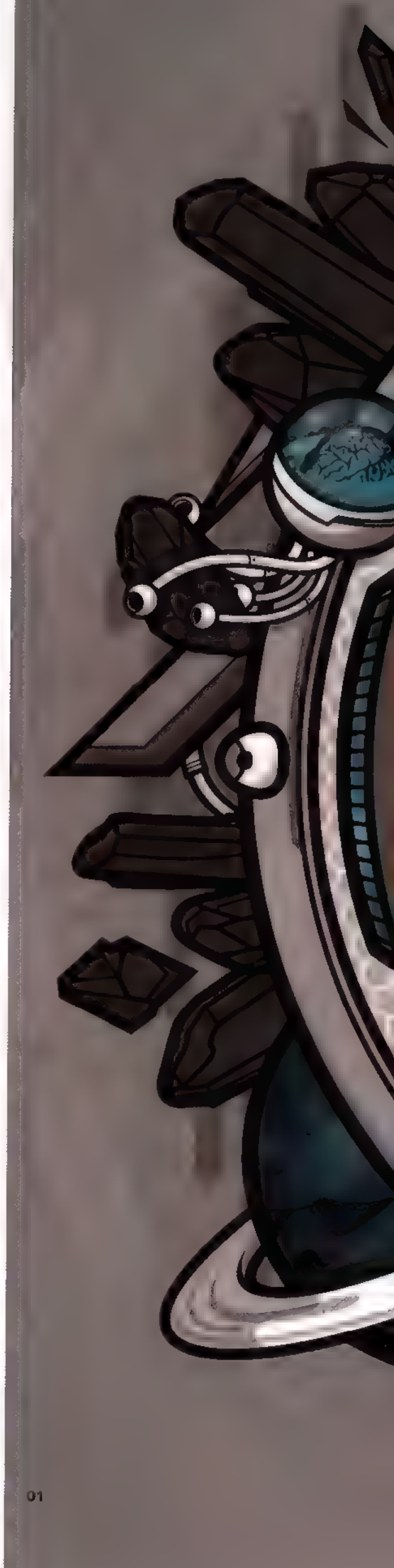
"It's definitely become more of a staple of my work: the cute stuff but with an aggressive, almost evil, twist on things," says Jared Nickerson of his often frantic, densely detailed character pieces. "I think it's just turned out that way. I've always liked that mix throughout all forms of arts. Like my birds that aren't always happy, my mushroom characters with weapons, or milk cartons with vampire fangs – random stuff."

The Canadian illustrator is now ensconced in Seattle. Working entirely with vectors, Nickerson is synonymous with a clean, crisp character style mixing pop culture references with a darker, more surreal tone, à la Robert Crumb. His style can be clearly seen in Funchat, an app project for social mobile entertainment company Funmobility. The commission saw Nickerson team up with illustrator Dacosta Bailey to create a series of 30 characters to be used as avatars – each with five emotional states – along with the supporting user-interface graphics, including buttons, chat categories and the typically bustling, anarchic backgrounds for which Nickerson is known.

"The most important part of the project was the creation of the 30 characters, so we sat down and tried to get a solid style throughout for each character, and then transition this style to all the supporting UI elements," he says. Working in Illustrator, the pair used everything from the Pencil tool for quick sketching and the Pen tool for precise linework to transparencies and gradients for shading, and the Pathfinder to combine shapes for uniform colouring.

"I don't typically use gradients for shading," Nickerson admits, "but we used a slight gradient in almost every single one of the characters' faces to give them universal lighting. This was done by putting the gradient type on radial and adding a white or similar light colour in the upper-left of the head to create a sphere lighting effect."

Nickerson's distinctive character style has developed over his years as a full time freelancer. His earlier aesthetic, he says, was much more minimal, with simplistic lines, before he adopted a more portrait-like approach. "In the last few years I got into my own sort-of character style, and I've stuck with that. I enjoy them, and they seem to be popular." →



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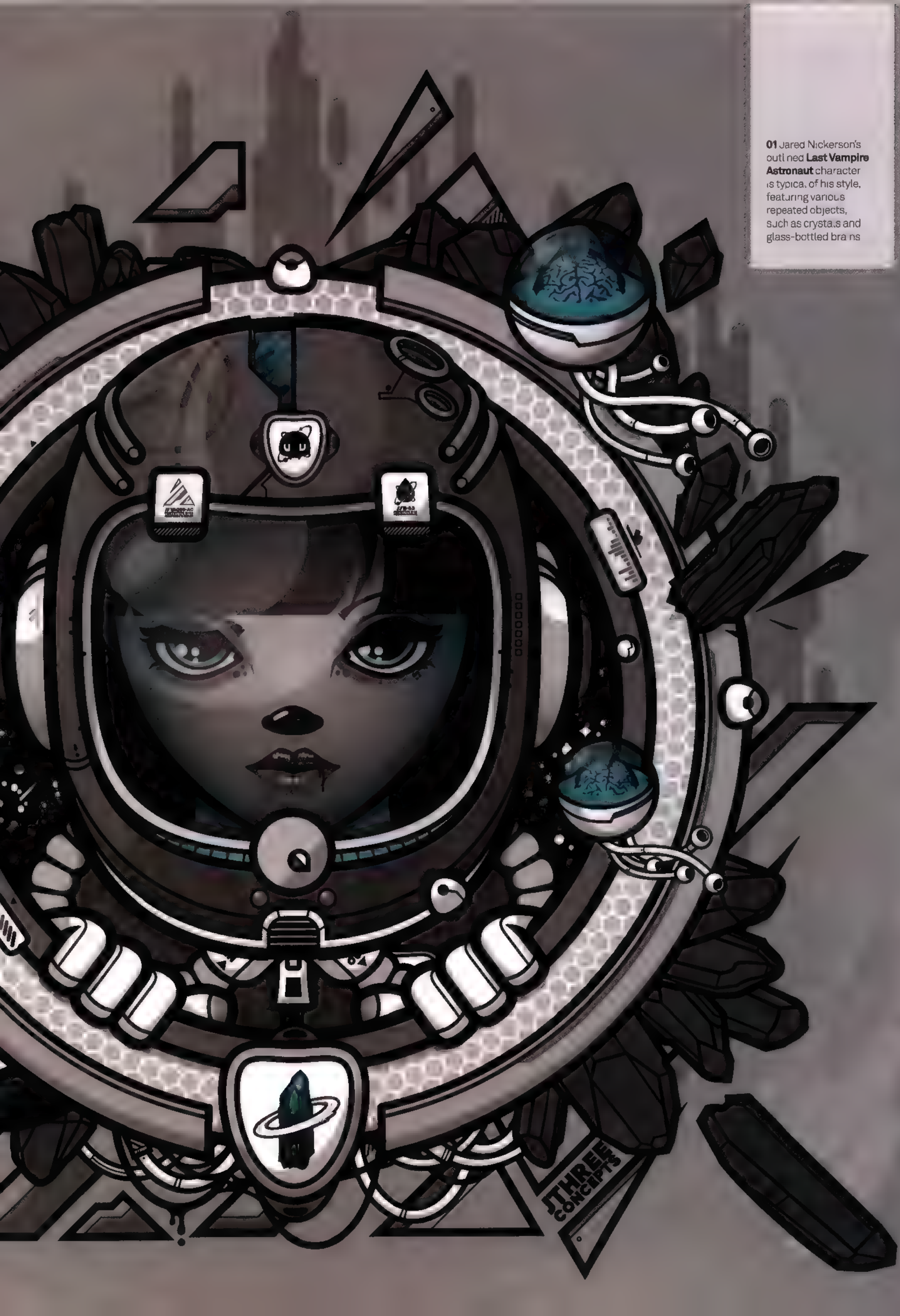


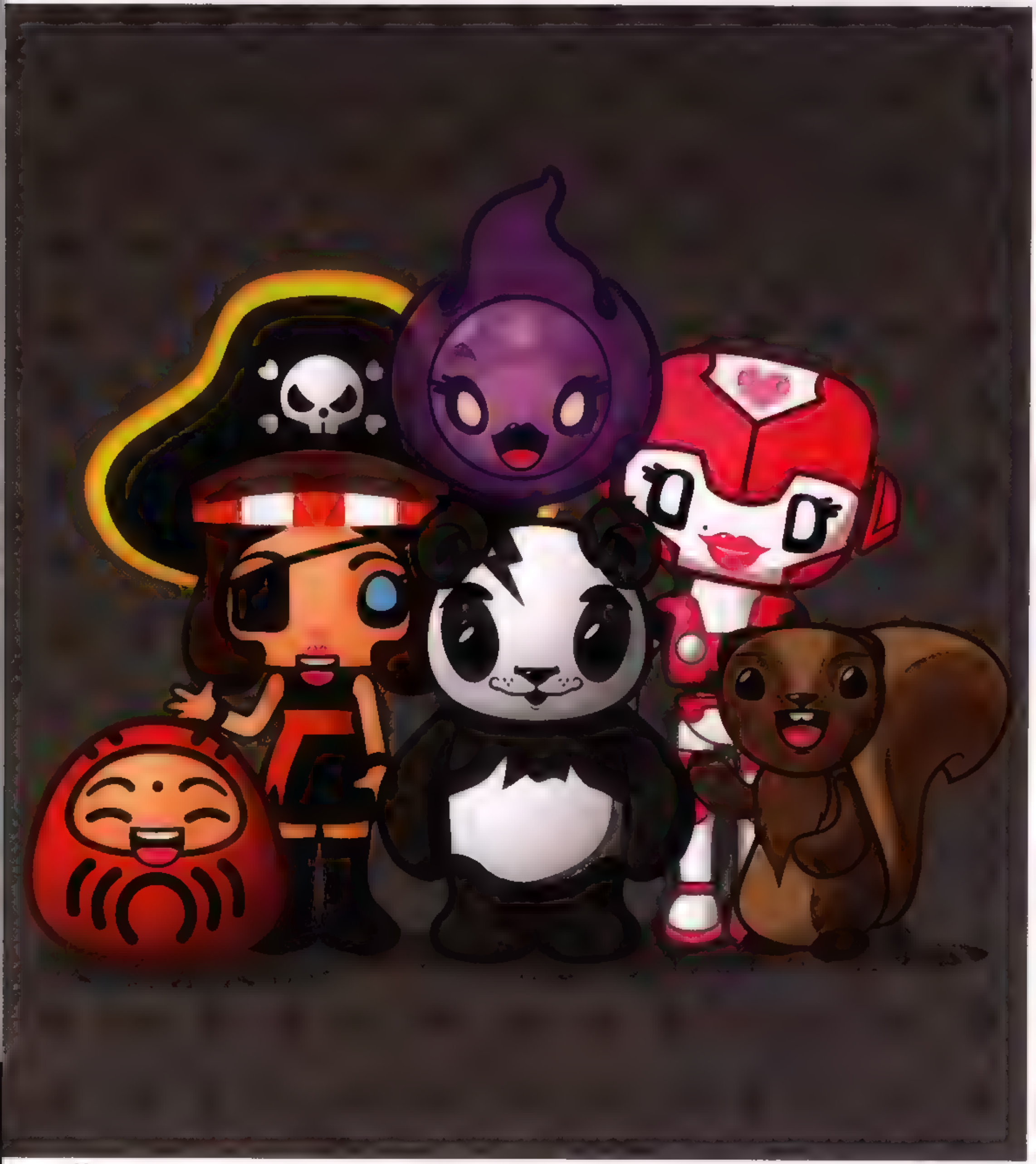
01 Jared Nickerson's outlined **Last Vampire Astronaut** character is typical of his style, featuring various repeated objects, such as crystals and glass-bottled brains

02 Nickerson worked with illustrator Dacosta Bailey to create 30 characters, with **five emotional states** each to be used as avatars for Funmobility's Funchat app

03-04 "The hurdle in this project was coming up with and then fleshing out the **30 characters**, their personalities and also their general look," says Nickerson

05 A **slight gradient** was used on almost every single one of the characters' faces to give them a universal lighting

06 Nickerson's For The Love illustration is available as a wallpaper and also comes as an **iPhone case**



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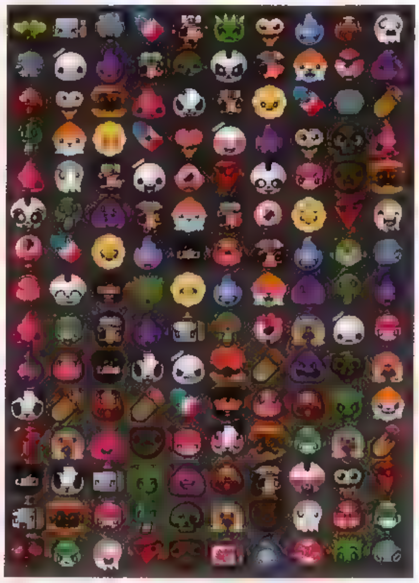

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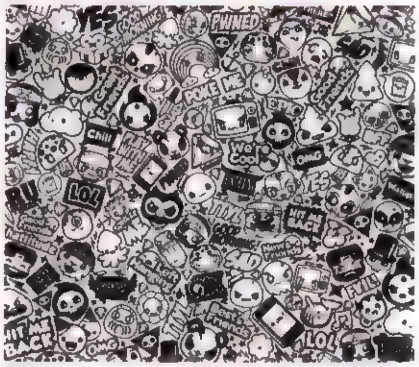

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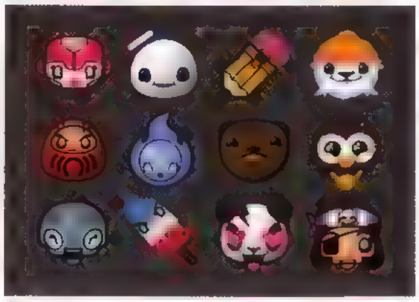

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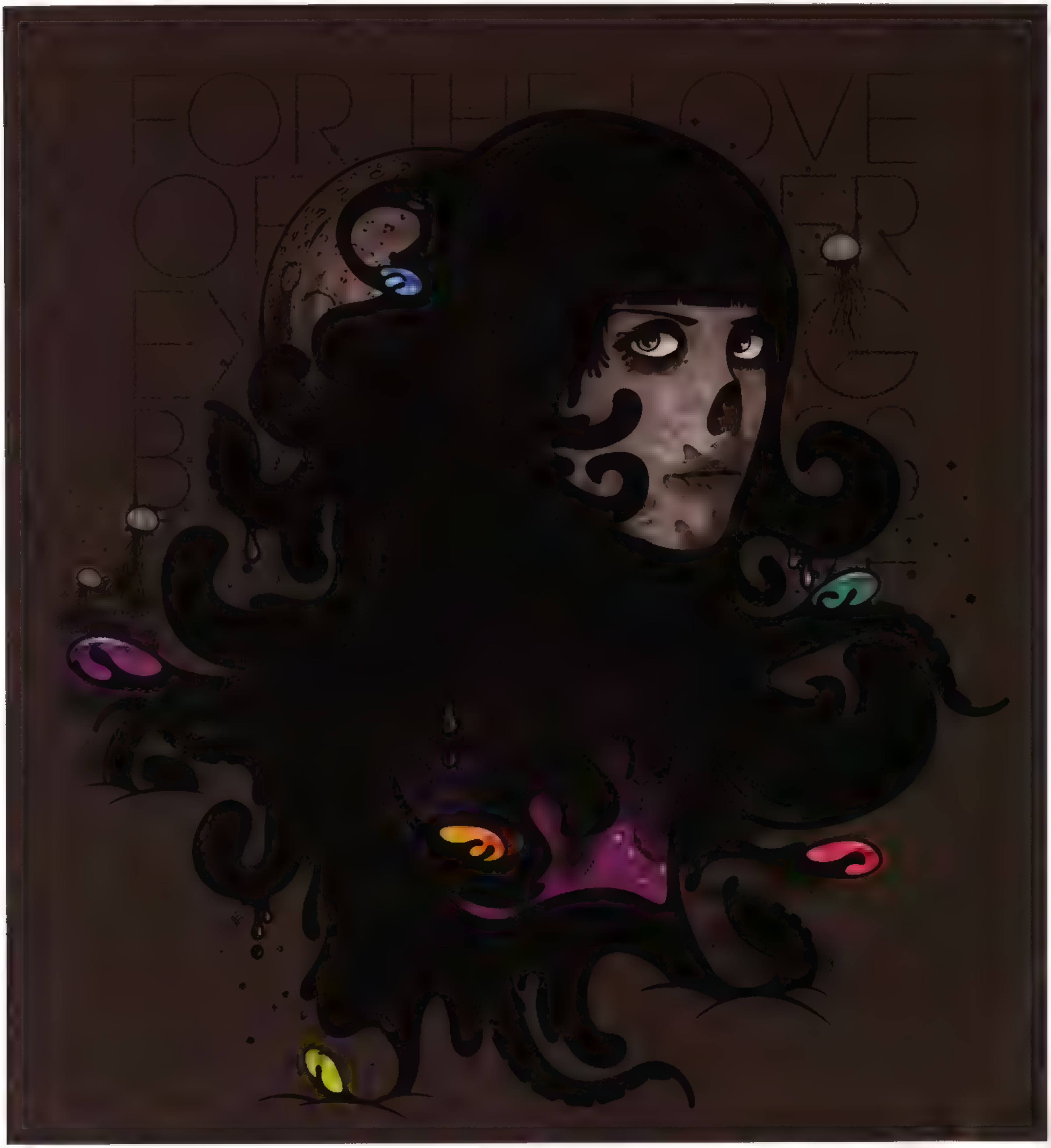
→ Regardless of subject matter or client, nearly all of his images intriguingly blend the cute with the grotesque. Mini-characters that at first appear happy are, on closer inspection, wielding weapons, while sad birds sit atop text such as 'Humanity has raped my soul.' Far from pretentious, this sort of incongruity is darkly amusing.

While it's no surprise that clients such as Adidas and Nike would gravitate towards Nickerson's style, he has also attracted more traditionally corporate companies, such as Microsoft. He sees no real difference – at least when it comes to his artistic approach. "A lot of my larger clients lately have come from Behance, such as Microsoft and Nike, and I guess they see something in my work they like. Who knows what they think? Then at the other end of the spectrum are people like Suicide Girls and Headwear, so it varies."

Adidas is one of Nickerson's many repeat clients. Having designed the original Adidas Neo robot branding back in 2010, he was approached in 2011 to rebrand the character for a new target market. "The initial idea was to have a square-headed robot that the client already had some branding based around, but that needed to be fleshed out a little more. The deadline was incredibly short, so I tried to keep things simple," he explains. "I started by referencing other simplistic robots and I tried to work the idea of a robot in an Adidas jumpsuit. I tried various faces and accessories until I found a look they were happy with," he continues.



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Sometimes a client simply wants to use his existing images, as was the case with DandyFrog, a French company that produces customised umbrellas. They wanted his personal piece Psychedelic Apples of Death, a typical pattern with the pithy phrase: 'Fuck your sneakers'. "That's not unusual," Nickerson says. "When I do personal work it often ends up paying off anyway, because it often features in client work – or part of it does anyway, as happened with Psychedelic Apples..."

This ability to re-use elements of patterns easily is an advantage of working in vector illustration, he says. "It's different to other digital media though because they're just shapes – you're not drawing. So you have to approach the medium differently: it's more about organising than doing brushstrokes, and you have to gear your mind differently."

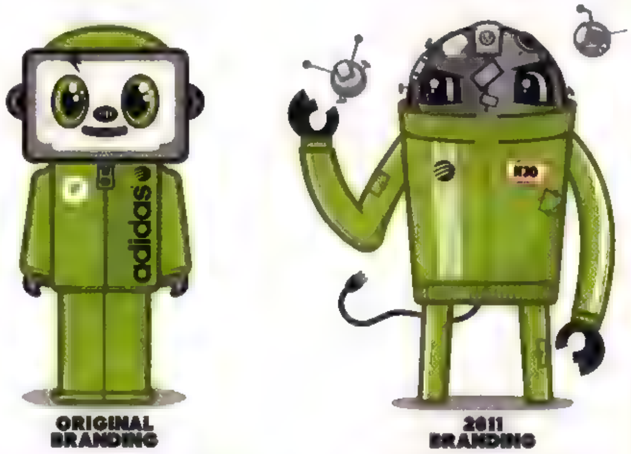
Nowadays Nickerson tends to begin a project by going straight to the keyboard. "Most people start by sketching things out, but over the years I've eliminated that extra step. In some cases I wish I still did sketch ahead of time, just for planning reasons, but overall it's fine – I'll doodle instead." He's also switched from a tablet to drawing everything with a mouse and the Pen tool. "It's probably my most-used tool in Illustrator," he reveals. "Also, people are surprised I don't use layers in my work – it's all on the one layer and the individual characters are grouped objects."

He isn't afraid to venture into less familiar territory, either. "I was commissioned by anime music festival Atomic Lollipop to create a logo, mascot, supporting characters and graphics for the event. The client was incredibly specific on →

Profile
Jared Nickerson

07-08 Adidas Neo: "I tried to work the idea of a **robot in a classic Adidas jumpsuit** so it would be immediately recognisable as a robot, but also as an Adidas product," Nickerson says

09-10 Geomagnetic Cosmic X-Ray Specs: and a **T-shirt design for Nike Air**, part of an ongoing series of projects with the global sports brand


adidas
ORIGINAL BRANDING
2011 BRANDING

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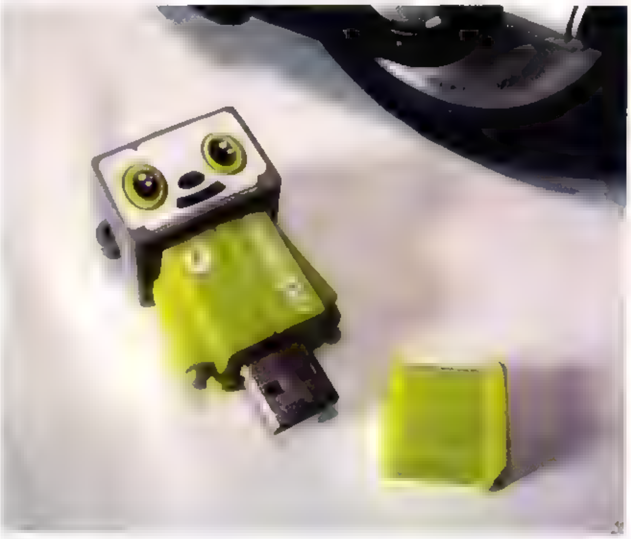

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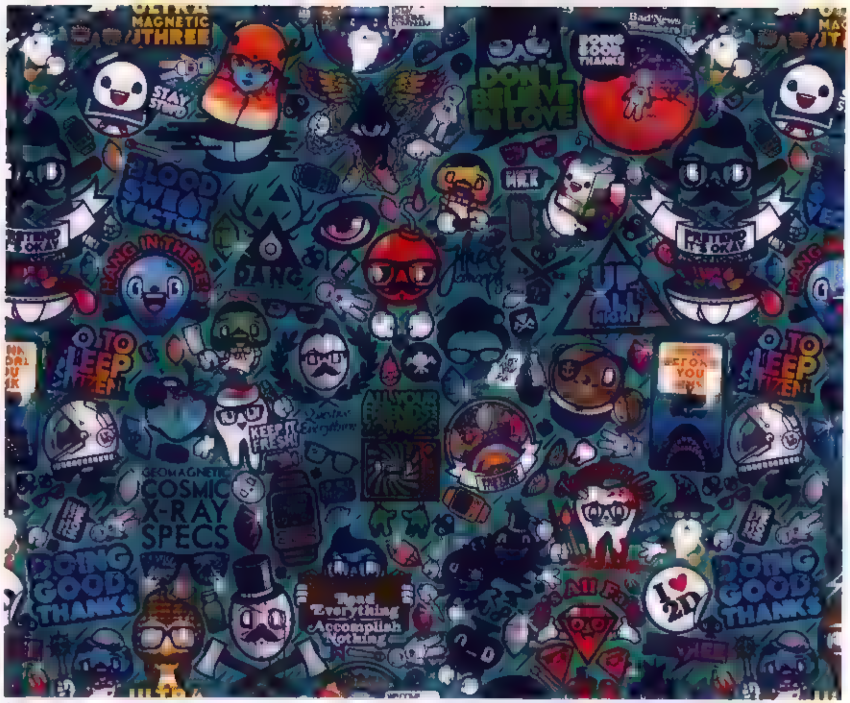
DON'T BELIEVE IN LOVE
BLOOD SWEAT VECTOR
DANG
UP ALL NIGHT
KEEP IT FRESH
GEOMAGNETIC COSMIC X-RAY SPECS
DOING GOOD. THANKS
Read Everything Accomplish Nothing
I ♥ 2D

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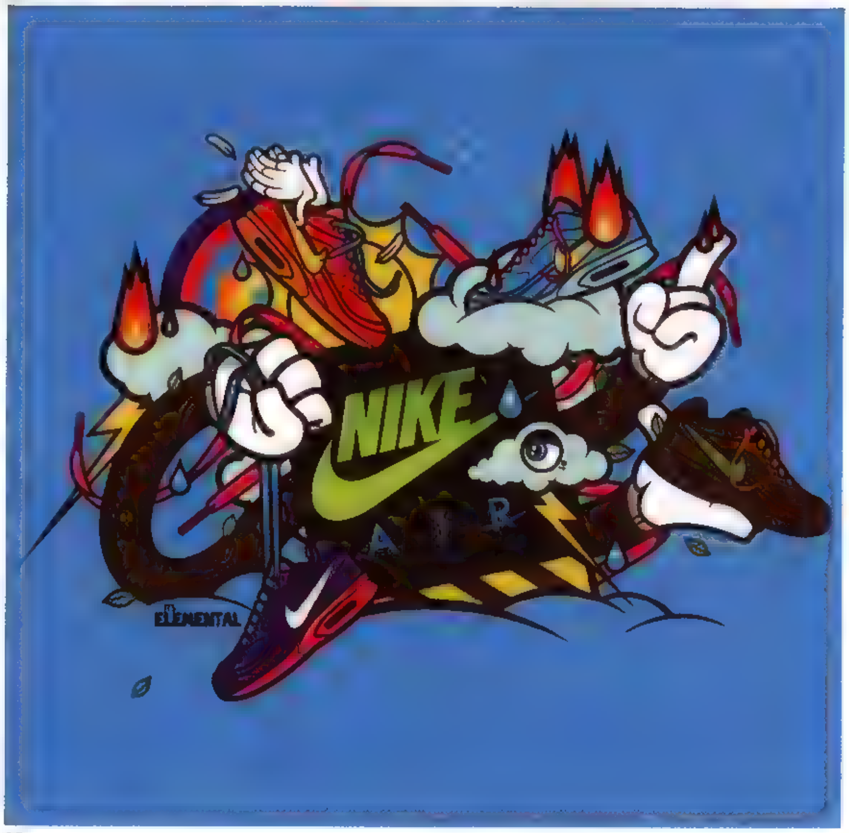

NIKE
ELEMENTAL

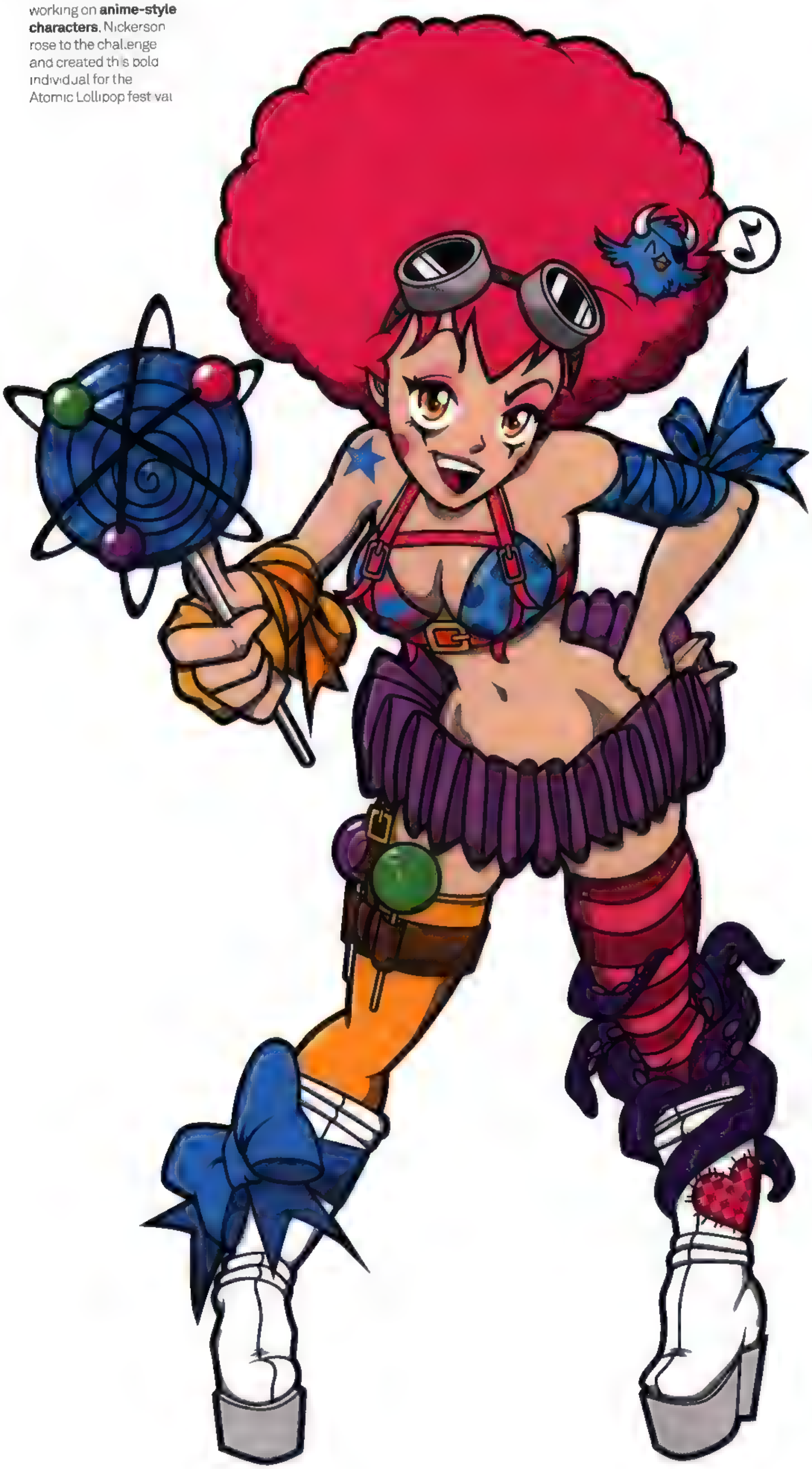
10

→ what it wanted to see, and the idea was based on classic anime," he recalls. "I rarely, if ever, work with anime characters, so getting the look and feel just right, not only with the core character but also the supporting elements, took a bit of work. Because of the various different aspects – character design, typography, arrangement, print prep and so on – I utilised almost every Illustrator tool that I know for this project."

As well as illustrating, Nickerson also co-founded BloodSweatVector with Brad Mahaffey, for vector artists to share work, gain feedback and be inspired. "We wanted a place for artists we liked to post work and get feedback. It's important to have people you respect commenting on your work. It's invite-only, so if an artist wants to join we see if their work is in the style we like." Recently Nickerson also launched a resource section on the site, where you can purchase wallpapers, vectors and so on.

The artist's 2013 projects include some rather cool 'Skullington' sickers for Facebook mobile and a collaboration with Adidas Originals. And thus Nickerson remains one of the character artists to watch – and his original style continues to win him huge clients across the globe.

11 Despite rarely working on **anime-style characters**, Nickerson rose to the challenge and created this bold individual for the Atomic Lollipop festival



11

Nickerson's tips for better illustration

1 Master the Pathfinder tool

The Pathfinder is absolutely great for solidifying shapes or elements together. Holding Alt/Opt while selecting the Pathfinder tool and then hitting Expand will make the effect permanent, which can be handy for saving memory – but only ever use this if you don't need to separate the shapes later

2 Pen-point accuracy

The Pen tool has been great to me over the years and still remains my number one tool. The precision that it gives you is incredible – for even more accuracy, always remember to have 'Snap to Point' enabled (View>Snap to Point)

3 Know where your files are

Naming your files properly by date and within a specific client folder can save lots of time later down the road. I find that being specific with file names helps me find different elements easily

4 Create your own swatch set

This can be a lot of work, depending on how many swatches you add. But whether it be using existing Pantone colours or creating your own, it's handy to have these on screen at all times for quick selection and reference. They're even good for visually planning out a piece. I have a specific collection of swatches that I just use for outlines and strokes, so I can visualise how different colours will look on a specific design

5 Don't be afraid to experiment

If you don't know what a tool is, then select it and start playing. Try exploring menus to see what things do. I find that this is the best way to discover new techniques and methods for creating a specific effect or result

Rob Bailey

Designer Rob Bailey is moving up in the world of illustration. He explains why he's most satisfied by the simple things in life

Rob Bailey
Freelance artist, illustrator and designer Bailey lives and works in Manchester, UK. His design work is characterised by a minimalist graphic style, and restricted use of shape and colour. Rob has worked for clients including SeaWorld and leading German newspaper *Zeit Magazin*.
www.robbailey.co.uk

With an international client list that includes the likes of Google, *The New York Times* and Ford, Manchester-based illustrator Rob Bailey is rocketing from strength to strength. But the discipline that he now revels in wasn't always his chosen career path. "To be honest, illustration was never the plan," he admits. "I just fell into it."

Bailey was studying for a BA in illustration with animation at Manchester Metropolitan University when other media caught his attention: "I didn't really make much animation or many illustrations during my course," he recalls. "All my tutors had been painters and printmakers, and they influenced me greatly. My final year project was a huge wall-sculpture."

It was only during the last year of his degree that Bailey discovered Illustrator and began to properly focus on the art of illustration. Having never used the software before, he was pleasantly surprised by its capabilities. "Before Illustrator, I used pencil and ink, but I had always been frustrated that I couldn't get the line as sharp and clean as I wanted – I had no idea that vectors existed," he reveals.

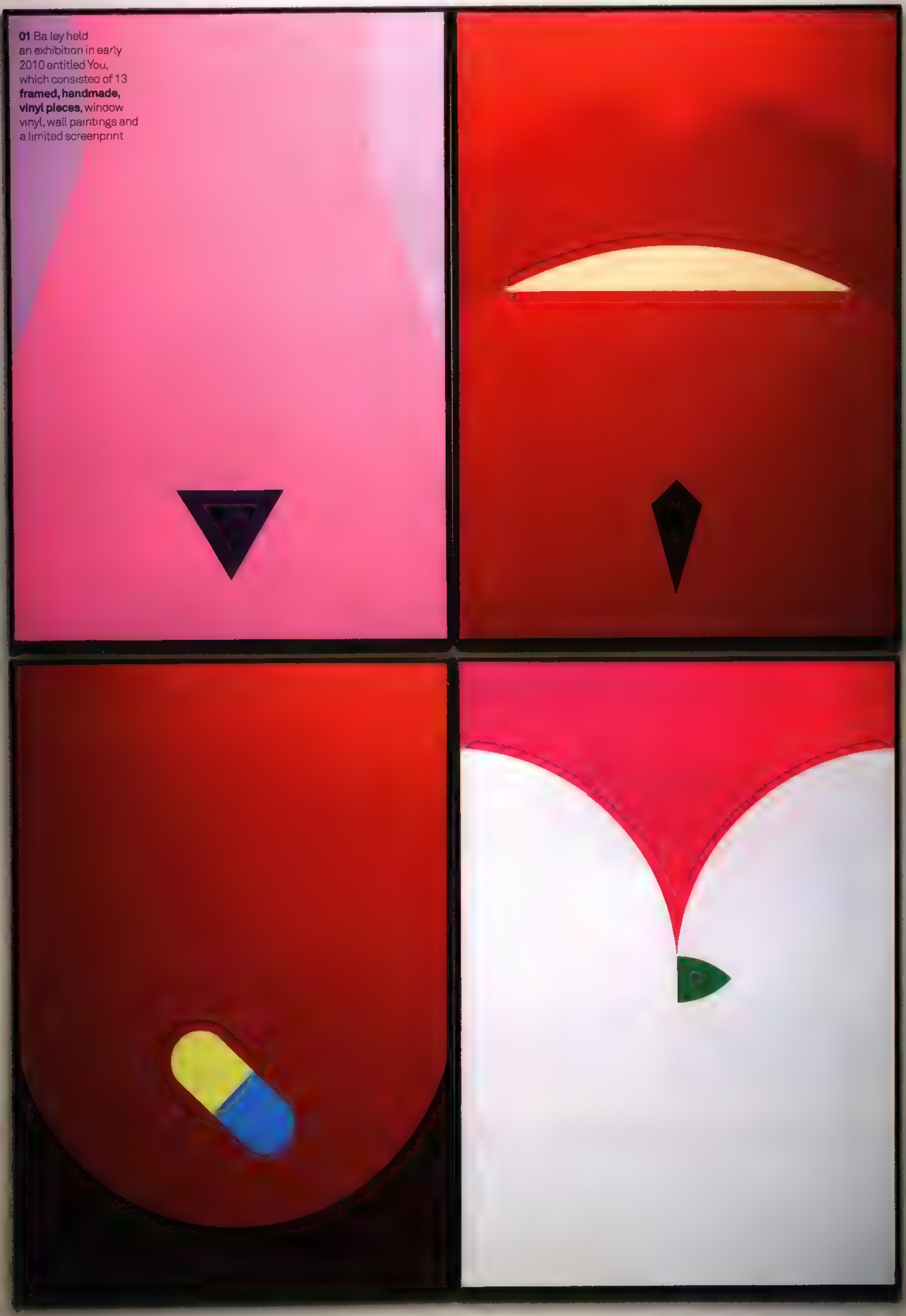
With the newly-discovered program added to his armoury, Bailey began creating images with one particular idea in mind: "I've always been interested in how much you can take away from something and still make it recognisable," he explains. "I think that everyone can appreciate that. There's something incredibly rewarding in recognising an image despite its simplicity."

This concept is evident across his portfolio, and his minimalist graphic style is now synonymous with his name. Drawing on the world around him, Bailey begins his design process by referring to various sources: "I have an ever-growing collection of encyclopaedias from the last 100 years that I've picked up from car boot sales and charity shops," he says. When I'm feeling uninspired I trawl through those and other source materials for whatever I'm drawing to try to find an interesting way to represent it. I see how much I can remove while still making it recognisable."

Bailey is incredibly strict with the amount of materials he uses to create each piece. "When building my work, I use maybe three basic colours, just to differentiate between the shapes," he says. "Then, when it starts to take shape, I'll start choosing colours. Sometimes the colours dictate the shapes; sometimes it's the other way round."

Towards the end of his degree course, Bailey landed one of his first commercial jobs, which meant he could put his unique style and new technical skills to the test. Having organised a club night with a friend, it was his job to create the posters and flyers to advertise it. "This project was the first meaningful thing I did in Illustrator," he says. "We had the posters risographed, which gave them a beautiful finish. The inks would dry patchy and the colours would never register properly, but it was cheap and a really satisfying way of printing. It gave the work something I couldn't have got if we'd had them printed digitally."

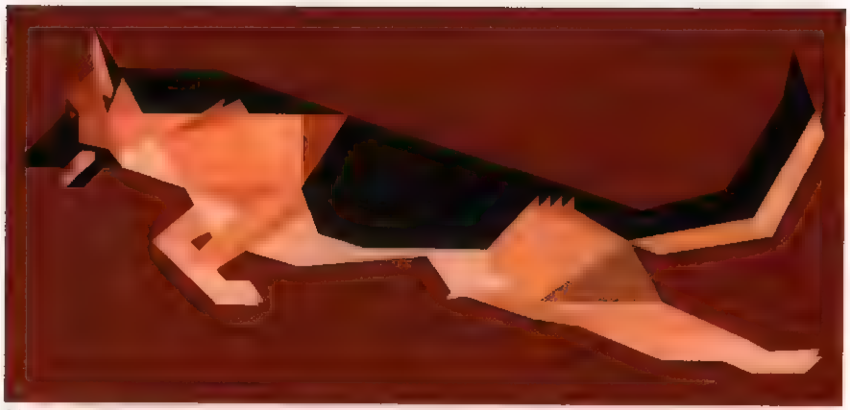
Bailey's distinctive posters created a buzz in the creative community, and off the back of them he was short-listed for the Best of Manchester awards and invited to do the first solo show at Common – a local bar that hosts regular exhibitions. Encouraged by such a positive response, Bailey continued to focus on his illustrations. In his limited spare time, he worked →



01 Bailey held an exhibition in early 2010 entitled You, which consisted of 13 **framed, handmade, vinyl pieces**, window vinyl, wall paintings and a limited screenprint

02 One in a series of dog prints by Bailey, which shows off his characteristic **restricted use of shape and colour**

03 Bailey had **12 days to illustrate 10 sets of famous friends** for *Zeit Magazin*, a German publication that found him through his site



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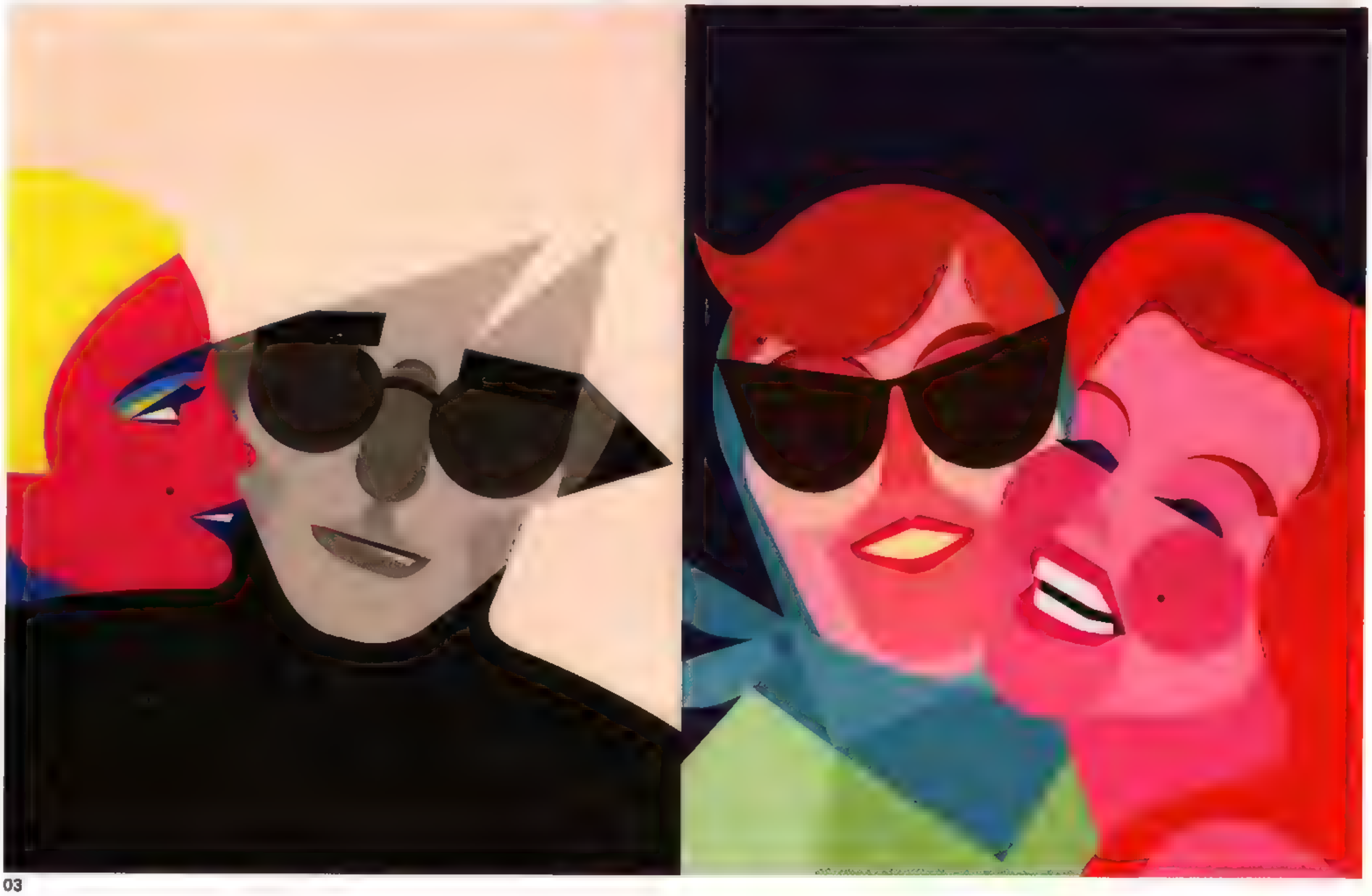


03

→ at galleries across Manchester. Through these work placements, Bailey met Sophia Crilly, the director and curator of local contemporary art gallery, Bureau. "Sophia always had an interest in my work, and when she applied to run the Project Space at Rogue Artists' Studios for a year, she picked me to do the first residency."

Project Space was set up to provide selected new artists with studio space, some money for materials and costs, plus the chance to work in a new environment. "The residency meant I had a few months to develop my work with the option of a show at the end if I wanted," he explains. "I'd always wanted to do more with my vector work, and being paid to take eight guilt-free weeks to do it was an amazing opportunity."

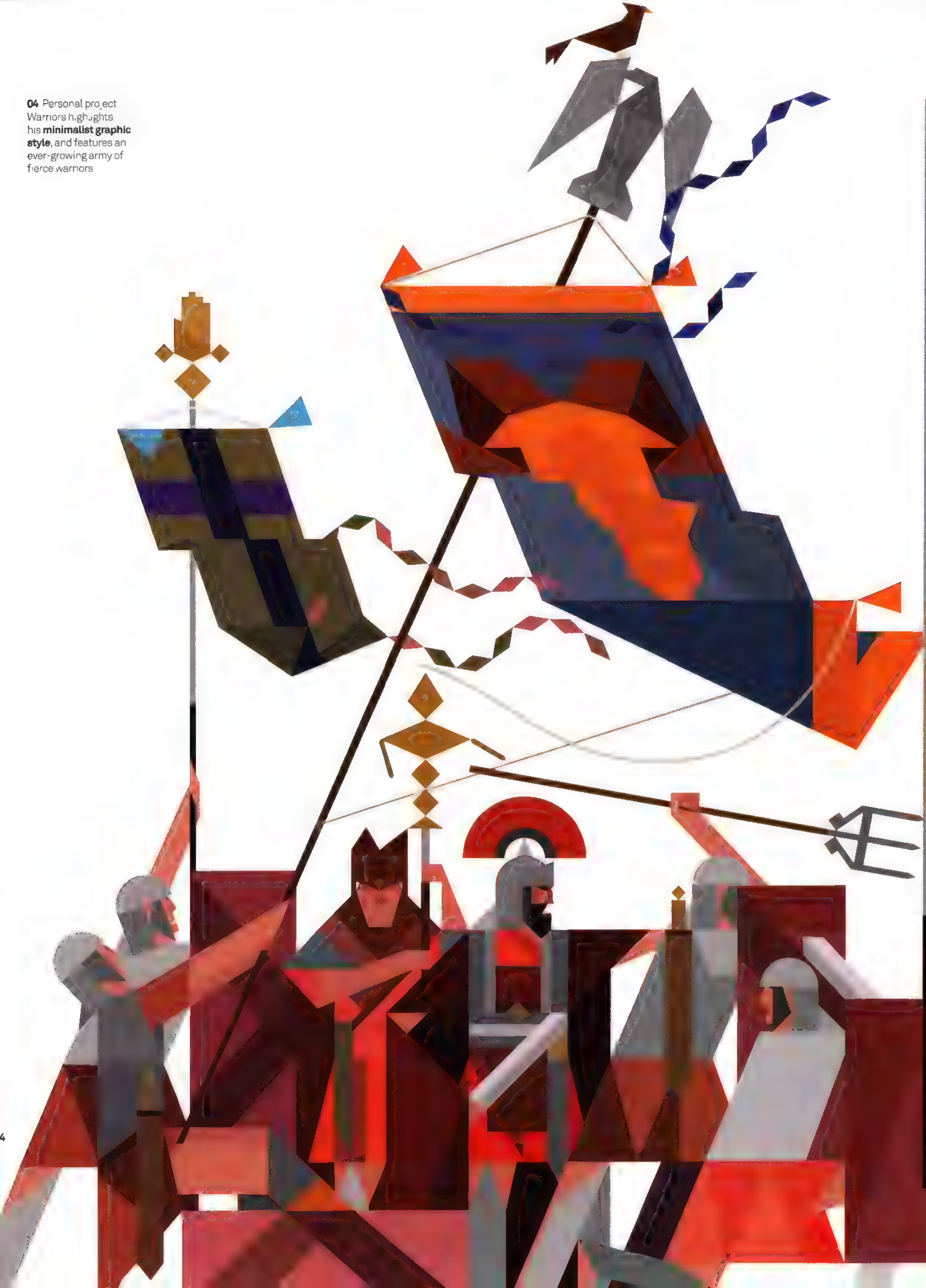
However, it quickly dawned on Bailey what a different environment he was about to walk into. "I realised that moving my computer from my bedroom into a vast, empty studio might be a little dull for everyone involved," he says. With this in mind, he decided to try to imbue his work with a little more flair. "A friend of mine had worked for years as a sign-maker, and suggested I tried working with a vinyl plotter," he says. "So I bought one, along with 60 rolls of beautifully coloured vinyl, and never looked back."

This new method also provided Bailey with a bridge to his work that he'd missed after moving away from traditional methods. "Working with the plotter gave me a chance to give some life to my vector work," he explains. "When you work on the computer, there's a space between you and the work, literally and metaphorically. Using the cutter I have the best of both worlds – the sharpness of the colour and each line is still there, but so are the tiny traces of human interaction, the little mistakes and happy accidents that give the sharpness of the graphics an edge."

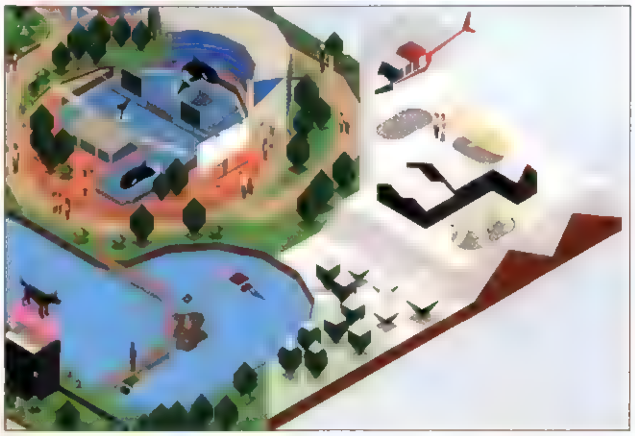
The residency proved to be an extremely productive couple of months, generating proposals of work and the offer of a permanent studio space at Rogue. But Bailey was also proactive in his search for jobs by becoming part of the now defunct Manchester-based illustration agency Toy.

Through Toy, Bailey learnt that design firm Code Computerlove had just secured the job of refreshing the UK SeaWorld website. The site's design had to recreate an online →

04 Personal project Warriors highlights his **minimalist graphic style**, and features an ever-growing army of fierce warriors



05–07 Bailey created illustrations for the online park planner of the Florida attraction, including **everything from rollercoasters to tourists**



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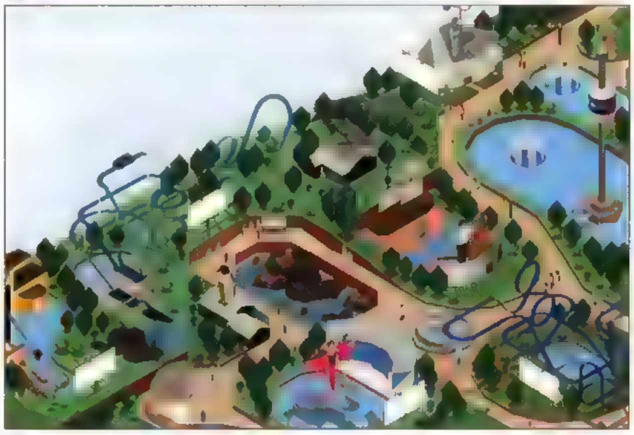

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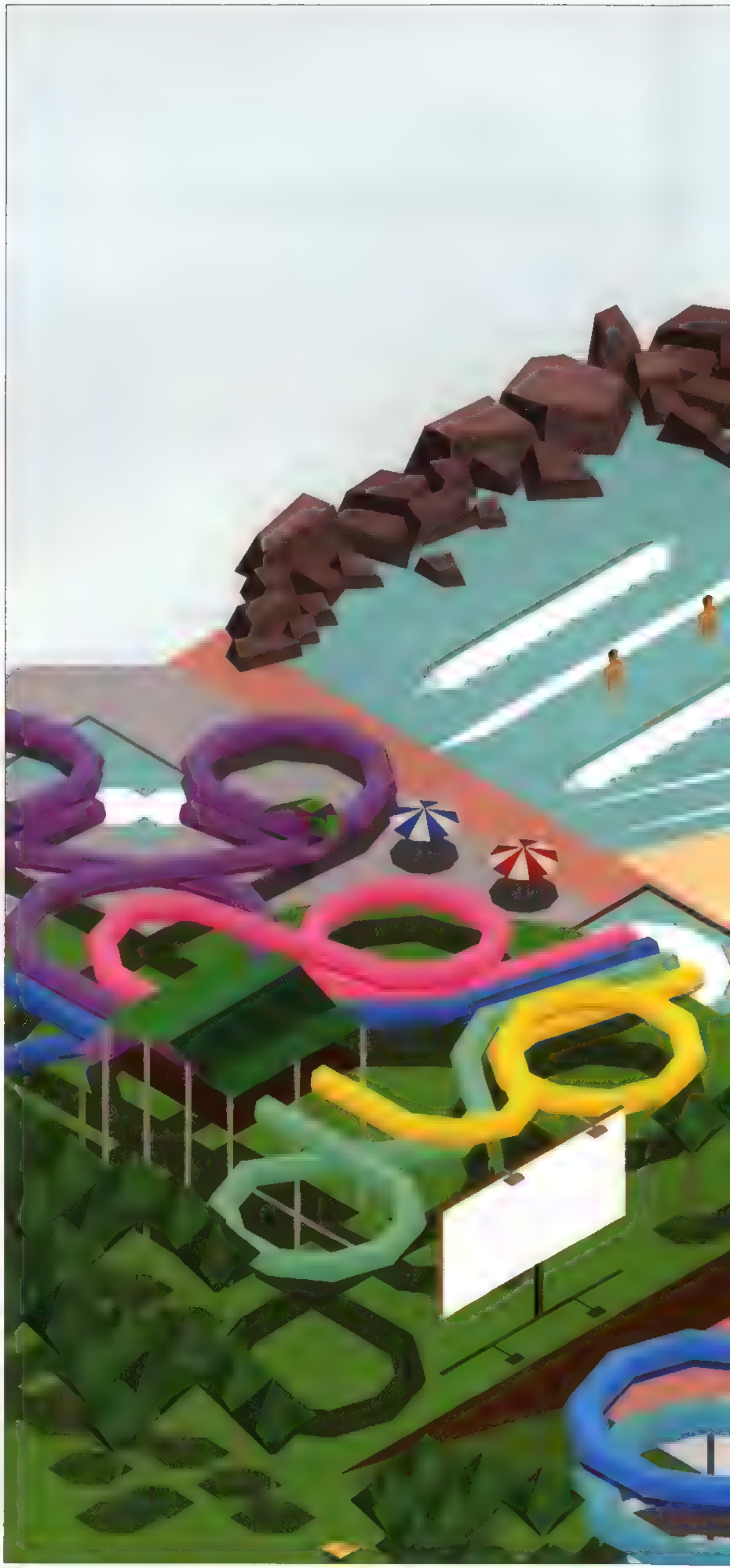
→ theme park plan that resembled that of well-known Japanese puzzle-action videogame, Katamari Damacy.

"As part of Toy, I'd done some murals in vinyl on the glass panels throughout Code's new studio, so it was already familiar with my work," he explains. Bailey pitched for and won the job, making him responsible for producing over 1,000 assets, including rollercoasters, log flumes, animals and tourists. "It was the biggest job I'd done by a long shot," he says. "It was three months with three days off, really long days and two deadlines per week."

Bailey has landed an impressive range of work via his website, which he launched in December 2011. One such job was for German weekly newspaper, *Zeit Magazin*. "I was asked to illustrate 10 sets of famous friends for *Zeit Magazin*," he explains. "The deadline of 12 days was really optimistic and I was thrown in at the deep end since I'd never attempted any sort of caricature before. But I think they are the jobs you learn the most from."

While all of his work retains his simplistic style, as Bailey looks to the future he's contemplating moving away from completely stripping back an image: "I'm still simplifying, but now just the details as opposed to the entire shape," he adds. "I'm not leaving everything out, just sharpening everything up. Now I'm interested in the small details, the bits that make the shapes sit together and the part that gives the work spark. I want to create some movement in my work."



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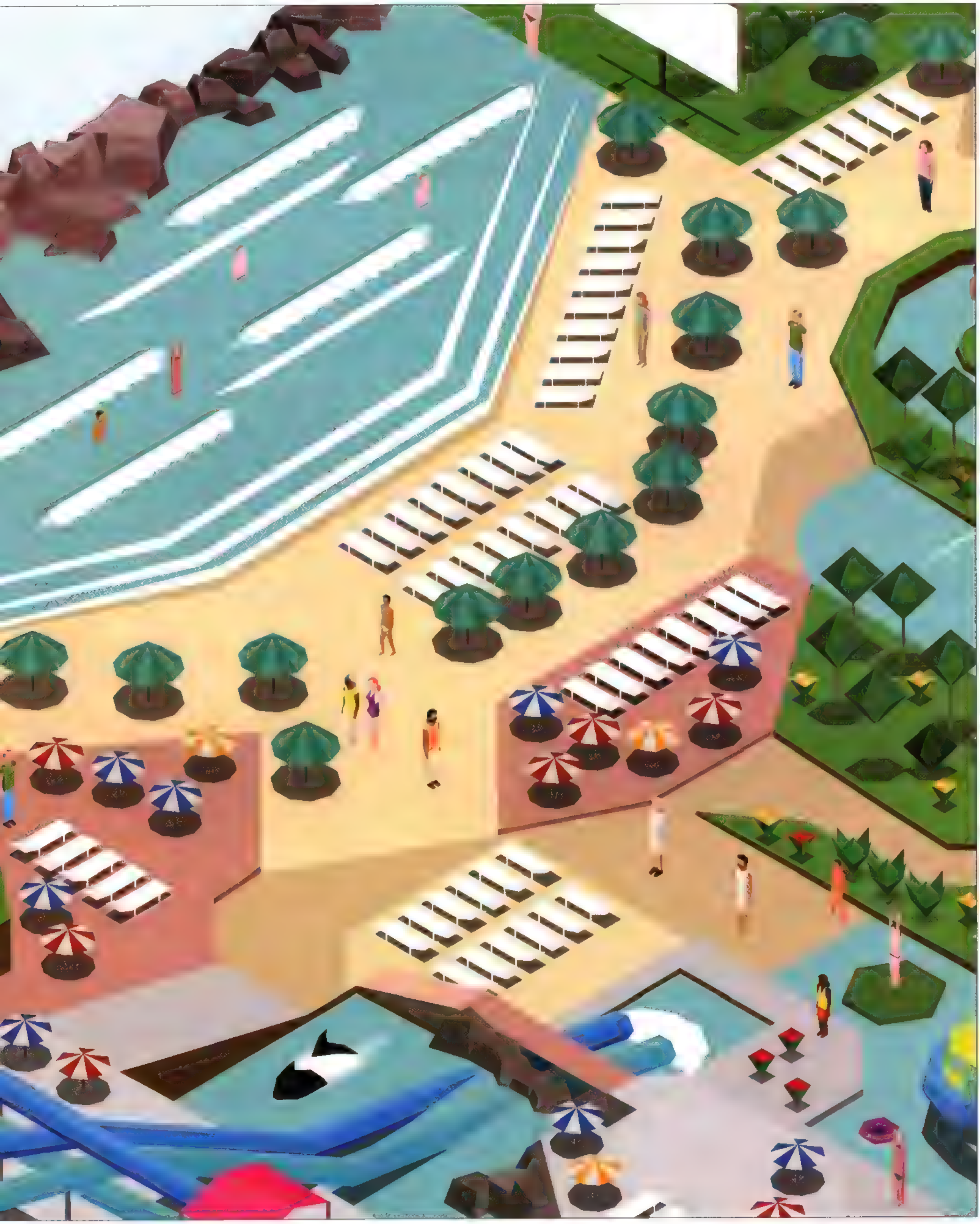
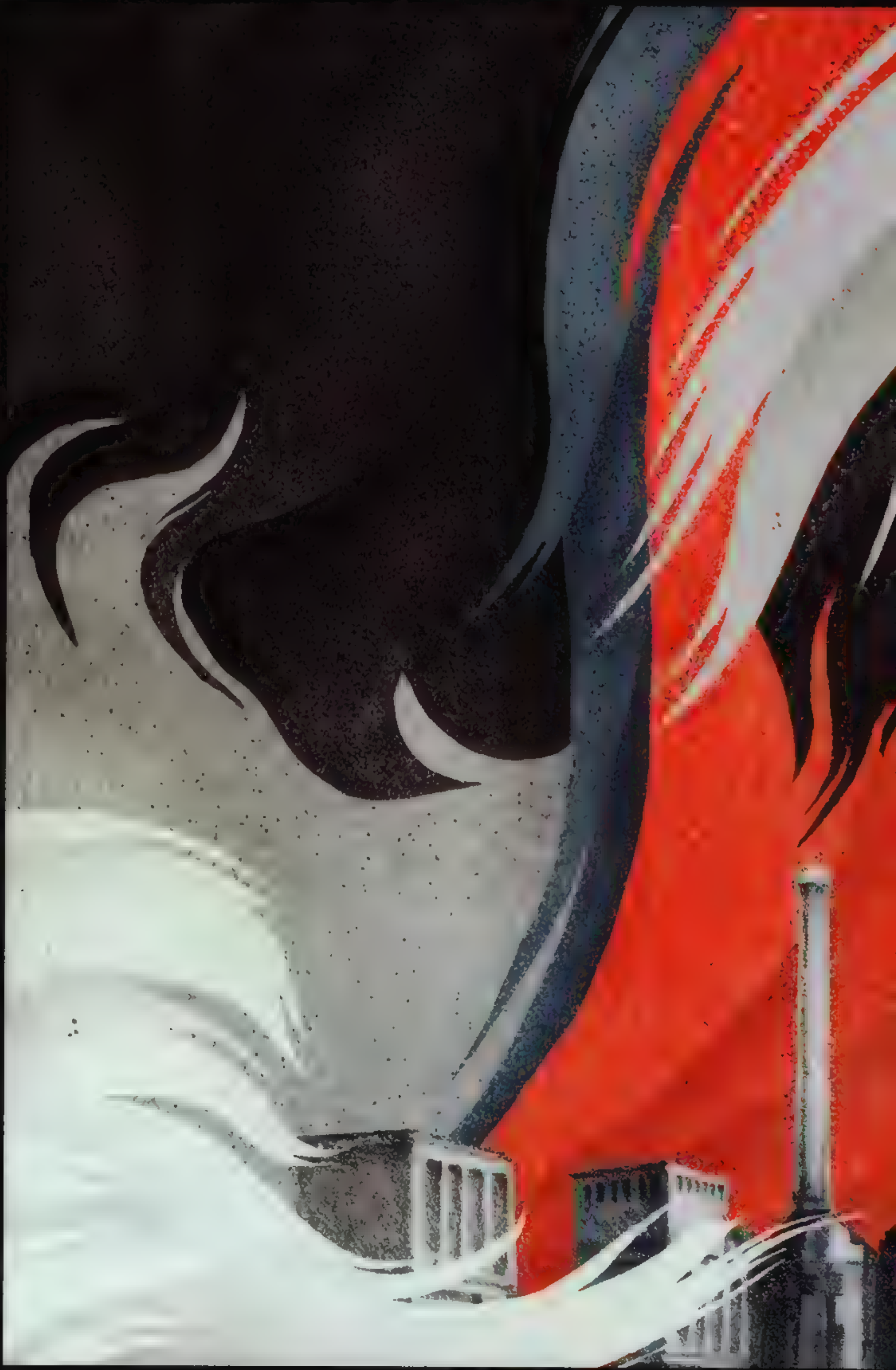


SHOWCASE

The best Illustrator artwork by the world's freshest creative talents

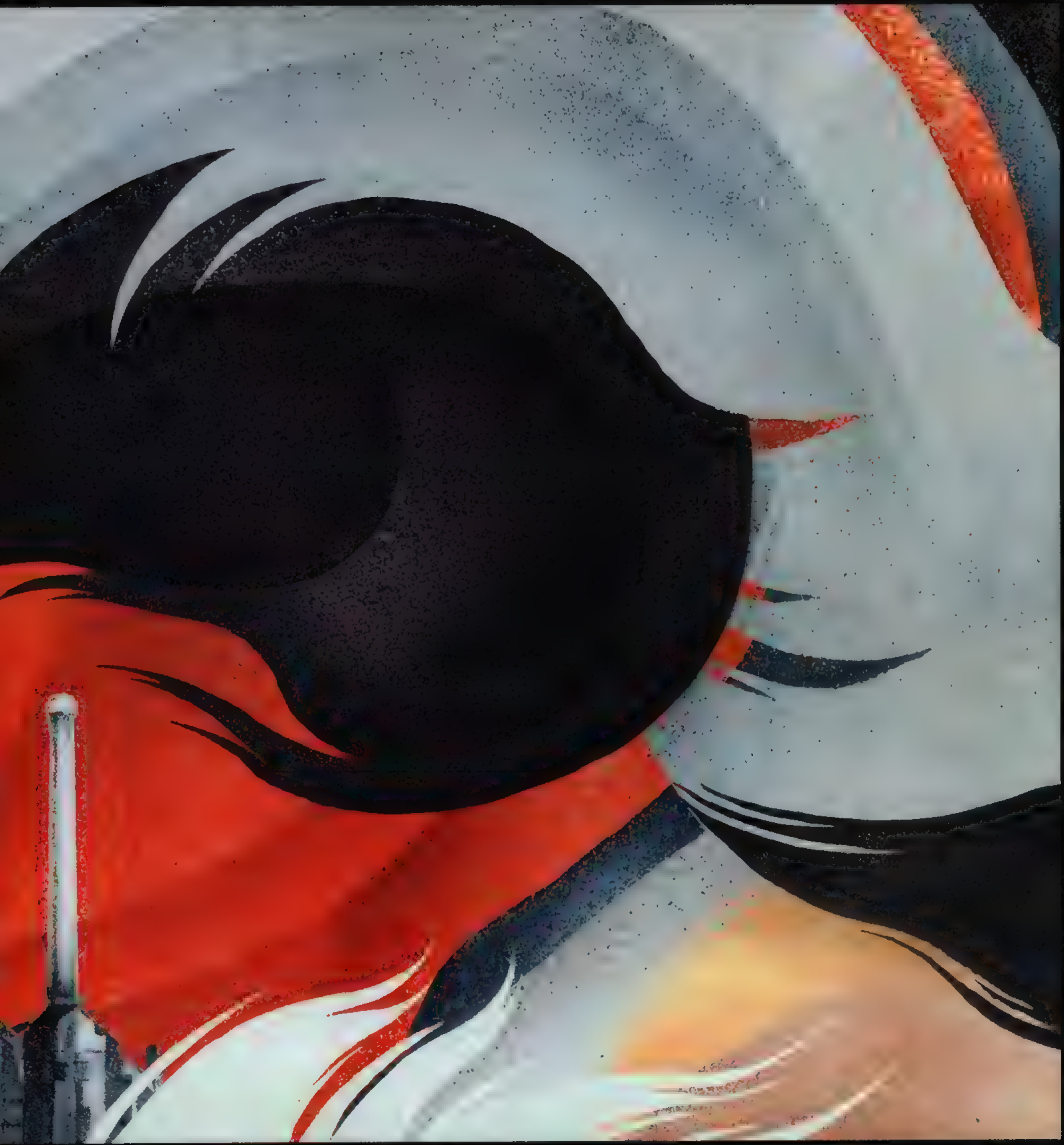
Illustrator is such a powerful tool that it enables designers, artists and illustrators to do pretty much anything they can think of. Over the following pages you'll discover the work of some of the world's freshest – and indeed best – Illustrator talents. Whether it's digital art, advertising work, graphic design or futuristic illustration, this huge Showcase section will inspire you through the amazing imagery – and also the thought process of the creatives on show.

So sit back and enjoy the plethora of work. We hope it will inspire you to create better Illustrator images of your own, no matter what discipline or subject area you work in.



01

01 This design by illustrator Eoin Ryan, entitled **Industry**, was inspired by an article in an old *National Geographic* from the 30s about industrial advances, with hand-coloured photos



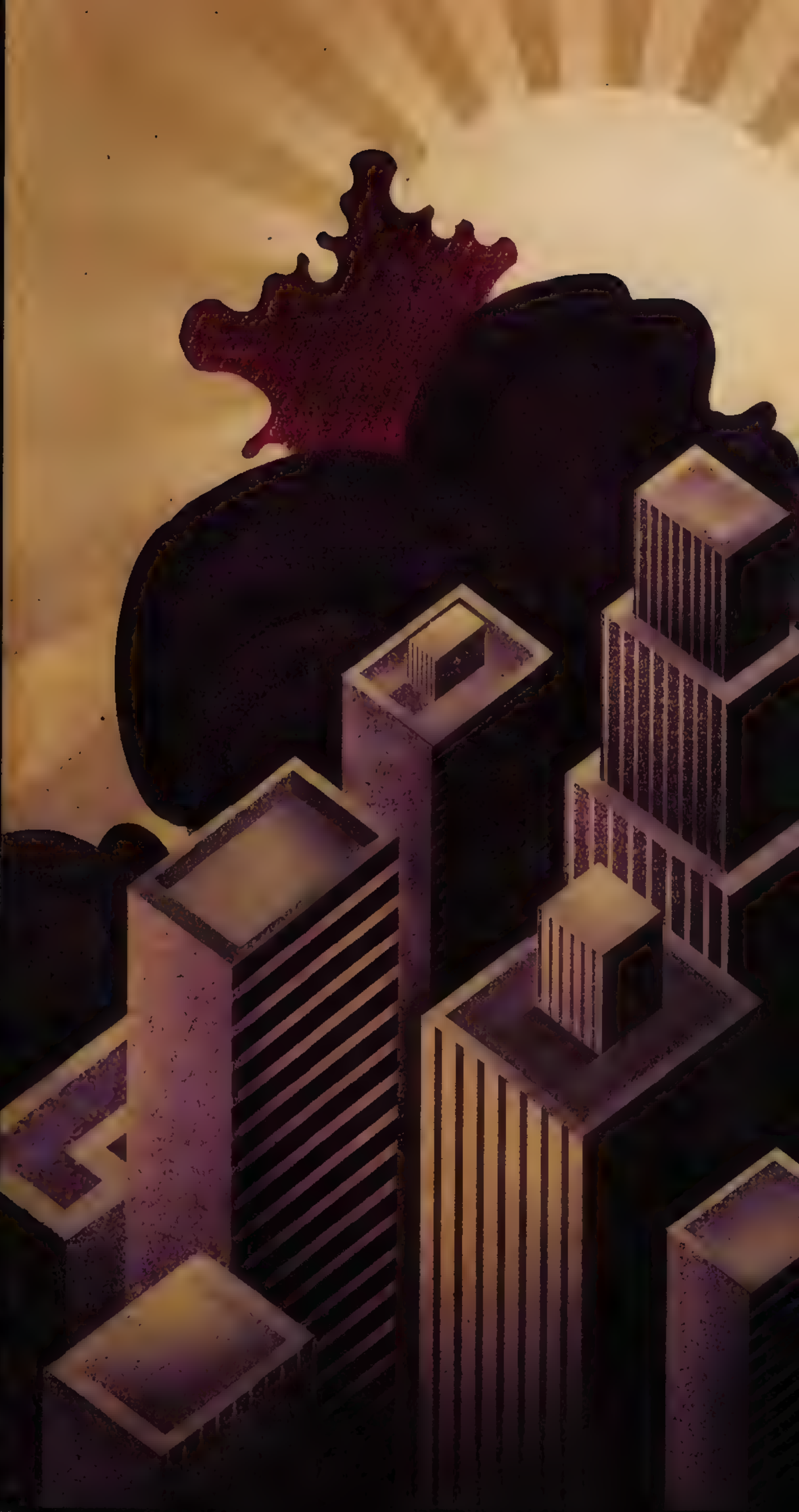
Irish-born illustrator Eoin Ryan on illustrations, inspirations and being his own boss

Eoin Ryan is an illustrator and animator from Dublin, currently living in London. Represented by Agency Rush, Ryan's recent clients include *Wallpaper**, *GQ*, *New Scientist* and *Wired*. He highlights a cover for James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* and a short animated biopic of Thin Lizzy frontman Phil Lynott's rise to fame as his favourite projects to date. In addition to being involved in more collaborations in the near future, he says he would also like to explore books and animation in more depth moving forward.

Computer Arts: What appealed to you about having a career in design?
Eoin Ryan: I needed to do something creative and I wanted to earn a living from it. Illustration seemed like an attractive lifestyle with lots of freedom and independence so I decided to head in that direction. It's pretty tough at times, but the good outweighs the bad by quite a margin in my experience.

CA: What were your first steps?
ER: I initially started out in classical animation when I left school in Ireland many years ago. It was a fairly intensive 2D hand-drawing animation college, which was great for drawing skills.
I then studied illustration at Camberwell College of Art in London, and graduated in 2008. Since then I've been slowly building up my client list and getting my name around as much as possible.

CA: How has your style evolved?
ER: My style has changed quite a lot since I started out. I now work digitally



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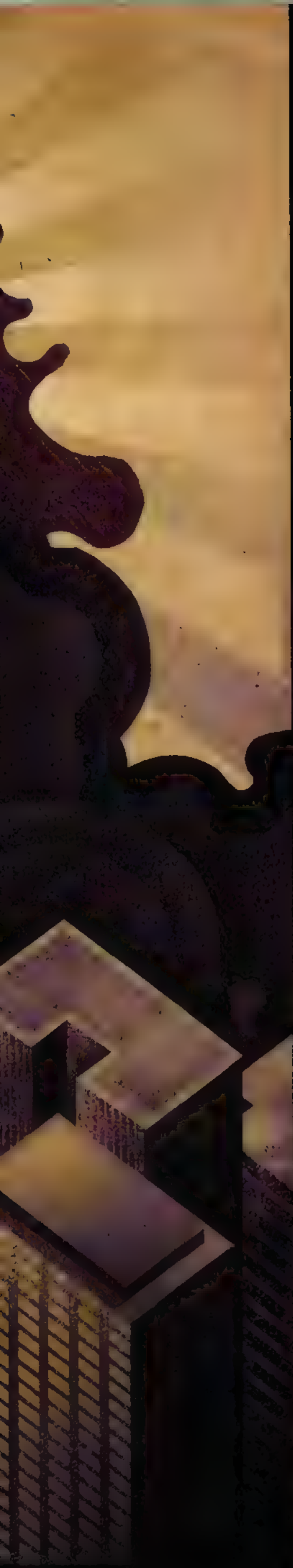
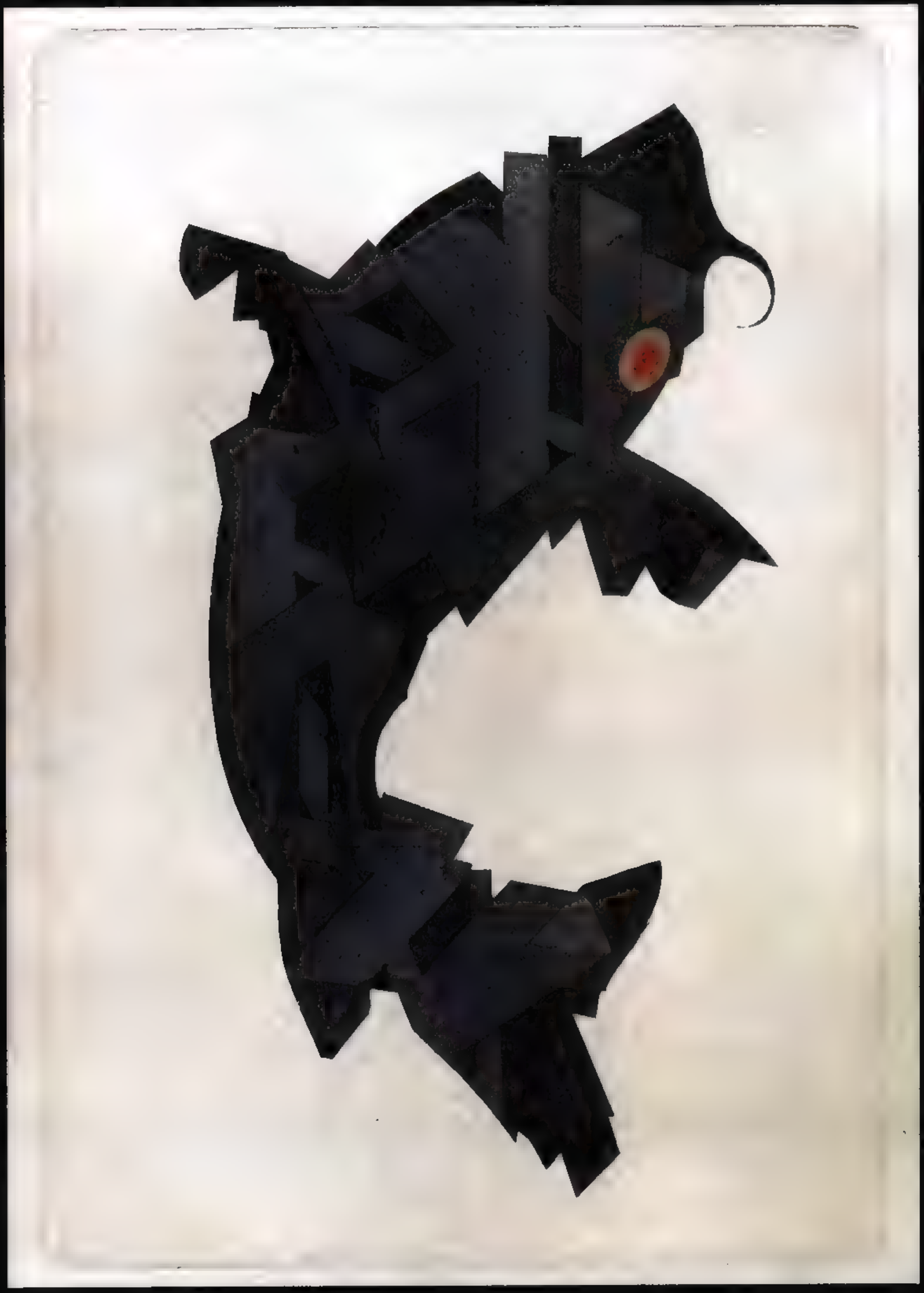


02 City Sunrise is a personal project inspired by an early morning trip to the city. "The light was incredible and I tried to recreate it in this piece," says Ryan.

03 Inspired by an exhibition by Japanese printmaker Kuniyoshi, **Koi** marks a turning point in Ryan's style. "The structural shapes work with the natural form," he explains.



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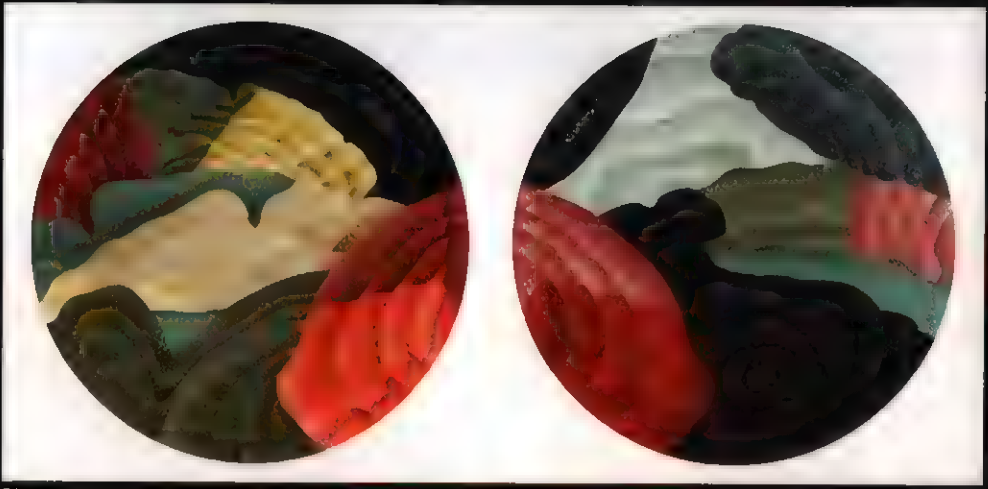
04 Ryan researched images of ancient Chinese and Middle Eastern maps, which were circular in shape, before creating this image. **Spheres.**

05 Solar was initially inspired by solar power but evolved to be "an experiment with bits of imagery I had been working on that went well together".

06 A commission for *Wallpaper**, **Indian Wedding** illustrates an article about the trend away from traditional ostentatious Indian weddings towards simpler, smaller affairs.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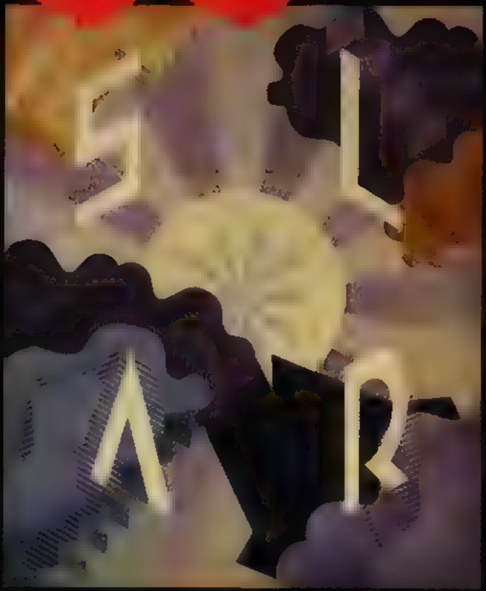
I'm fascinated by old prints, and maps. Junk markets are also a never-ending source of visual material



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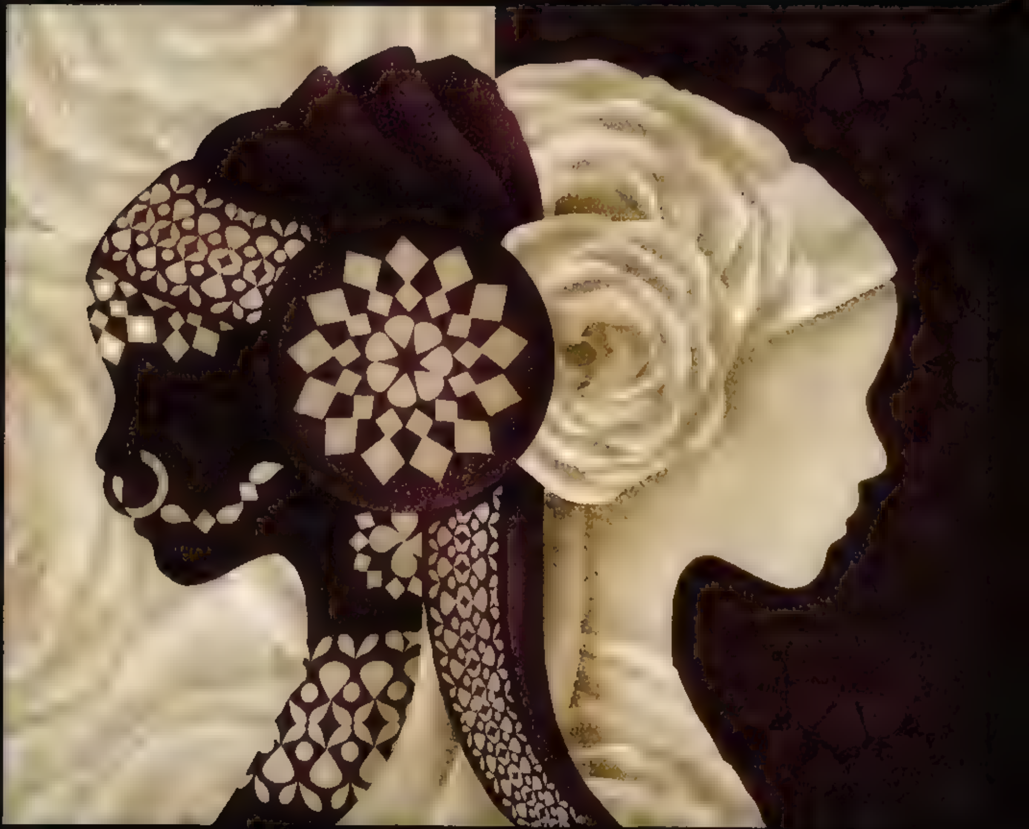

06

much more than I used to and that has definitely influenced the style of work I produce. Someone once described my style as 'pastoral Soviet Bloc' – that's as good a description as any.

CA: What inspires your work? Do your influences show?
ER: It's constantly changing but I'm always fascinated by old prints, postcards, maps, plans, infographics – that sort of thing. Junk markets are a never-ending source of interesting visual material.

CA: Talk us through your creative process – how do you start each piece?
ER: I usually start out with line-drawings and various textures created using ink and photocopiers, which I bring together in Photoshop. Sometimes I use Illustrator to create shapes and patterns.

CA: What has been the highlight of your creative career so far?
ER: My first proper commission was a big job for *Wallpaper** magazine, which involved about 14 different illustrations spread over a feature. After that project, the prospect of making a career out of what I was doing seemed real for the first time.

CA: What's the best part of your job?
ER: I enjoy the freedom to work my own hours, being my own boss – and getting paid to do something I love.
www.eoinryanart.com

David Roy Margaliot
Location: Jerusalem, Israel
Job: Illustrator
www.roymargaliot.com

Jerusalem-based illustrator and T-shirt designer David Roy Margaliot studied at The Bezalel Academy for Art and Design – a route he describes as a natural life progression: "The second I realised I could draw cowboys and ninjas and not just stick men, I haven't stopped drawing," he says. "It was natural that I chose to make a living from illustration."

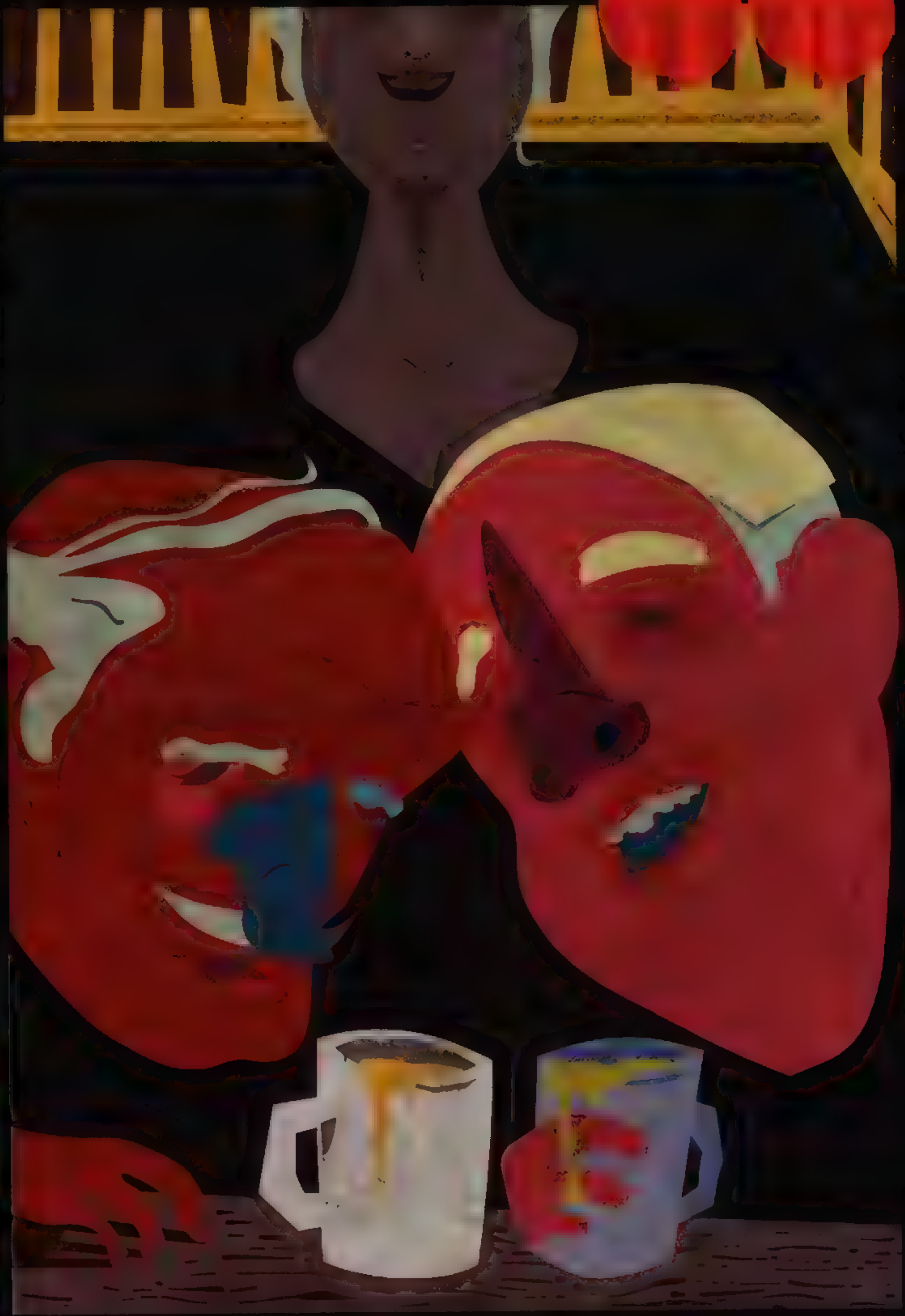
Since graduating in 2009, Margaliot has worked in an array of design capacities, from editorial to branding and apparel. He currently works as a T-shirt designer for a big fashion brand. It's a job that isn't without its pressures, particularly since he's become a father: "I used to work from home, but now I don't finish until late, which is hard when I want to spend time with my little girl."

In five years' time, Margaliot hopes to have an impressive portfolio of book illustration work, and to have staged an exhibition of work showing influences from Jewish Kabbalah. He says: "Illustration is a gift that I want to share with the world."

01 **Yediot Aharonot**
Margaliot created this piece for daily Israeli newspaper, *Yediot Aharonot*, to illustrate an article on how to spend time when you're waiting for a connecting flight. "I'm really happy with the humour in this piece," he says.

02 **Book of Beggars**
This piece is one of a series of illustrations produced by Margaliot for Jewish folklore blog, Hagirsa.

> The second that I realised I could draw cowboys and ninjas and not just stick men, I haven't stopped drawing



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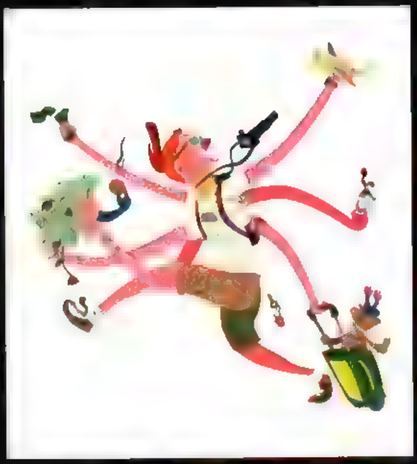


01

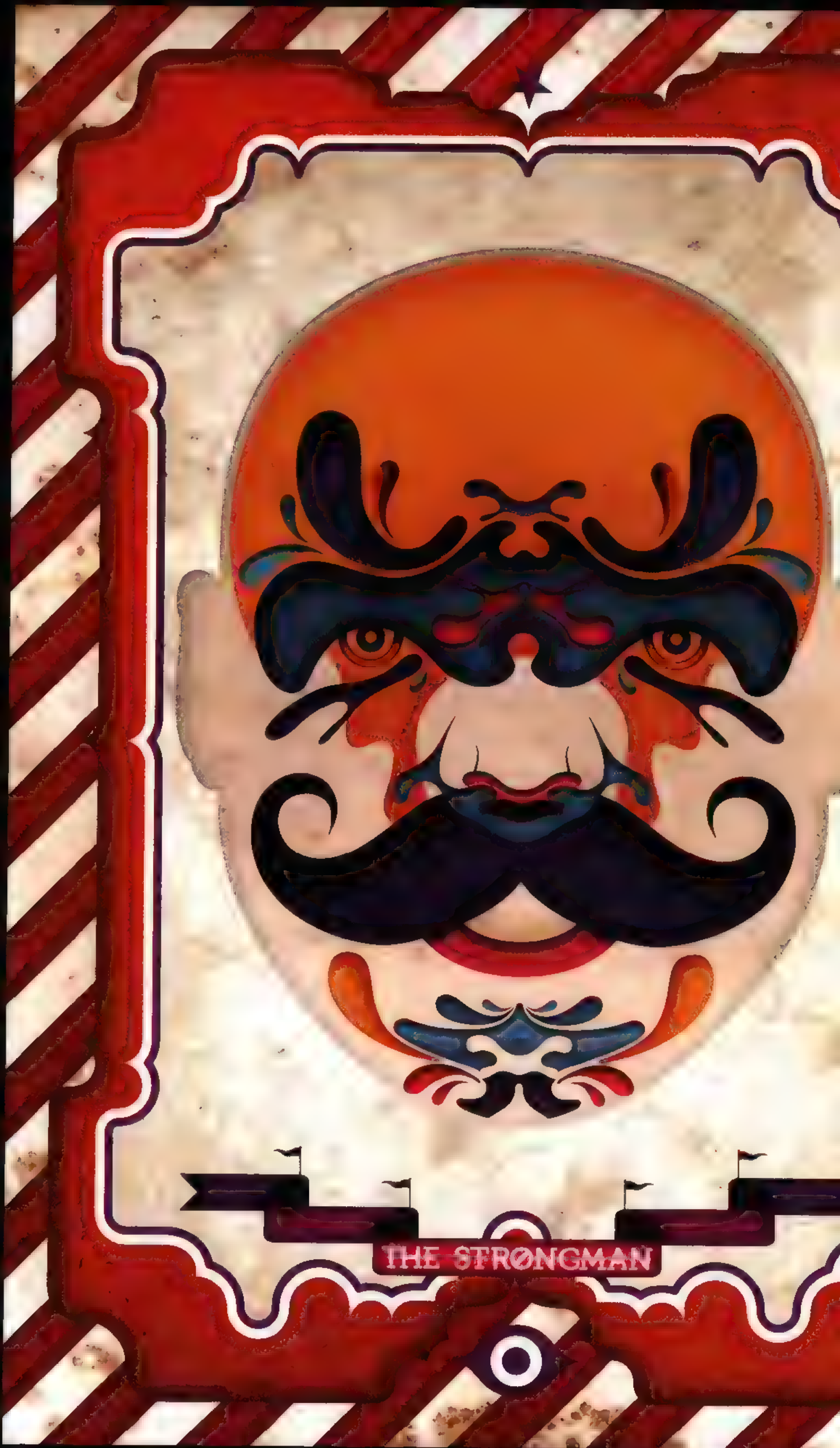
We enter the colourful world of Marcos Figueiredo, the designer who insists that more is more

Marcos Figueiredo of Velckro Artwork stumbled upon a career in design aged 26, after realising he had a passion for interesting flyers and record covers. He decided to study graphic design at Barcelona's Escola Massana after moving to the city, which is his wife's hometown, and has been successfully combining freelance work with stints at advertising agencies and design studios for the years that have followed. Currently a full-time freelance graphic designer, Figueiredo's clients include the likes of Red Bull, Heineken and Nike, and he aims one day to have his own studio.

Computer Arts: You have a very distinct look. Tell us about the Velckro style...
Marcos Figueiredo: Without a doubt, the first word that comes to my mind to describe my style is 'colour'. Colour is something that's really important in all my design work and I think perhaps it's what makes my work recognisable to other people.

The more colour I use, the more comfortable I feel. I find it difficult when I'm limited to a range of just two or three colours. 'More is more' is my creative mantra, and horror vacui is one of my best friends.

CA: Do you have a lot of influences? What inspires you?
MF: Music is my most important influence. I have a bass music blog, I occasionally DJ under my pseudonym Don Fuegote and, most importantly, I listen to music compulsively all day. I would also name South-American



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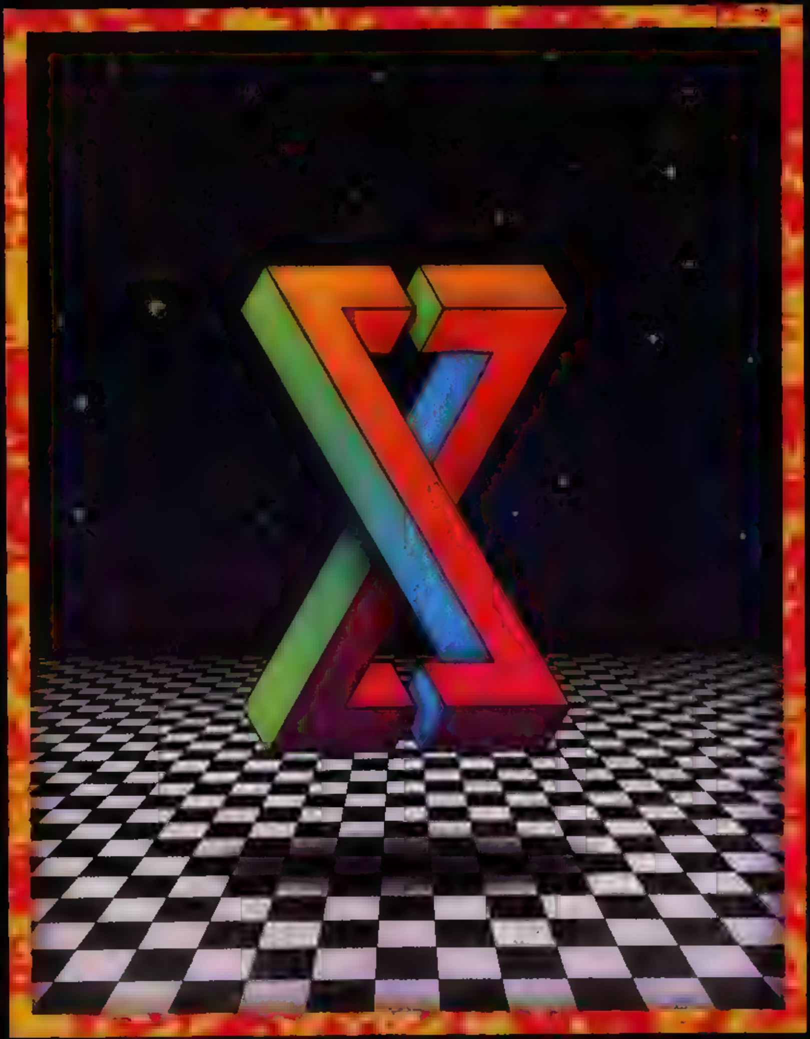
01 The Strongman. [illegible] Artwork was commissioned to create a year-long sequence of monthly flyers for the Stardust Club with a different theme running throughout.

02 A self-promotional piece, **Va infinito** was inspired by a fascination with the aesthetics of artist Kilian Eng. "Isometric perspectives can give you a headache," smiles Figueiredo.

03–04 Figueiredo created **Life is a RMX** in Photoshop after being briefed by Spanish magazine *Yorokobu* to illustrate an article entitled 'Life is a remix'

> 'More is more' is my creative mantra, and horror vacui is one of my best friends



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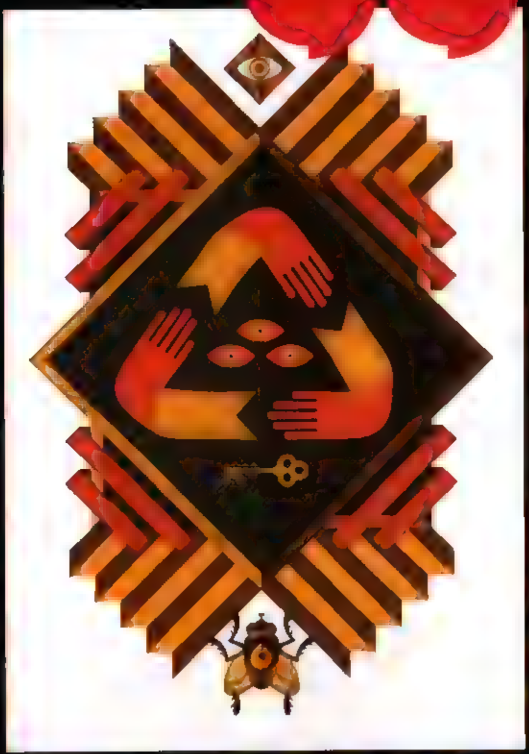

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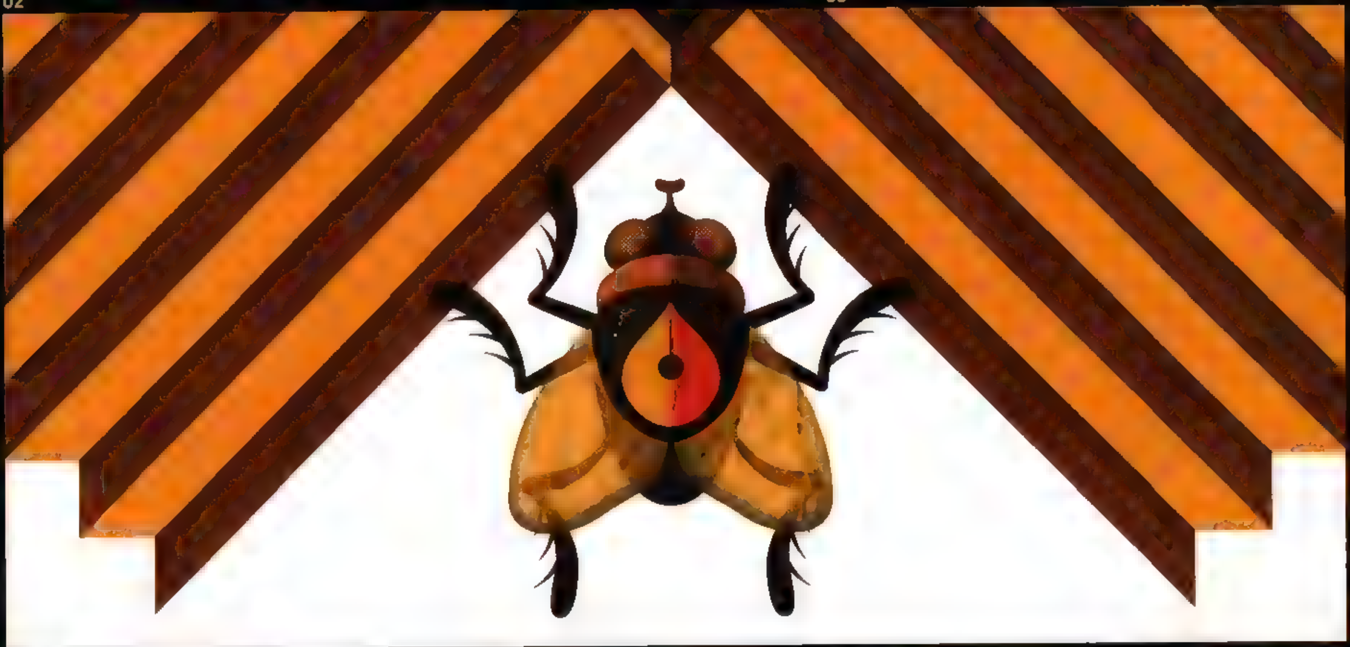

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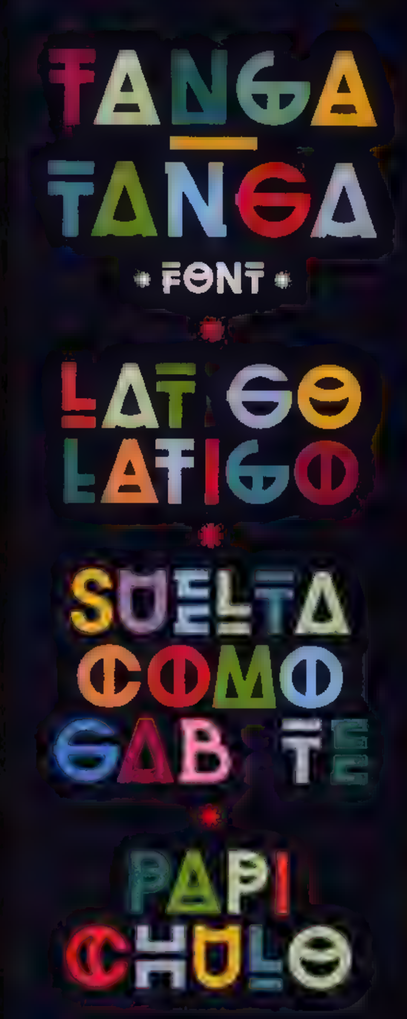
05 Figueiredo initially created his **Tanga-Tanga font** for a flyer, and later developed it for the launch of his website. The design was born of some cheeky inspiration: "The letter 'O' reminds me of the thong shape on a bottom," he laughs

06 Cover artwork for a new record label, Figueiredo designed his **Moombah** series in Photoshop. "I tried to imagine how different cultures' tribal masks will look 1,000 years from now," he says



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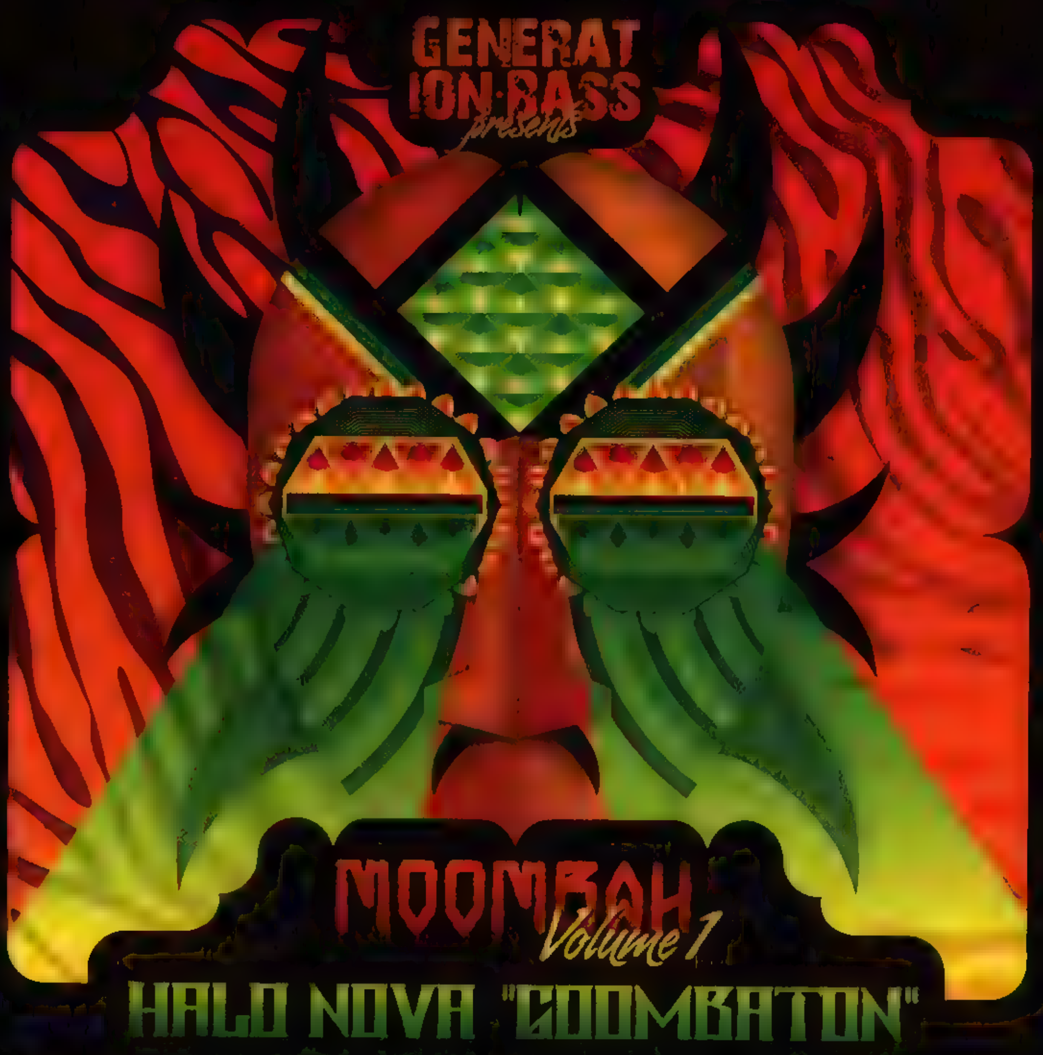

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design and street art as being inspirational, as well as Reggaeton, old-school tattoos, esoteric graphics, crazy nights, optical art and lots of internet procrastination.

CA: How hands-on are you in your design work?
MF: I do a lot digitally, but where possible I really love to get my hands dirty with ink or whatever's needed for a piece in my living room.

CA: Looking through your portfolio, which is your favourite piece, so far, and why?
MF: I love the different series I developed for Stardust Club. I had total freedom to create whatever I wanted, and it was my first chance to work freelance. Furthermore, many people have told me that they collect and have the work hanging on their wall, which is great.

CA: What's the best part about working in the design industry?
MF: I love knowing that a challenge will always be waiting for me. Also, it's great to be able to make a living from something that is my passion.

CA: What would make you think 'I've made it'?
MF: Right now I can only think about my career as a freelancer. In future, I would like to set up a studio with a couple of friends. Something small and familiar, focused on clients, with no limitations. It would be a way to keep working and always having fun.

www.velckroartwork.com

Nathan Manire
Location: New York, USA
Job: Designer and illustrator
www.nathanmanire.com

Originally from Detroit, Michigan, Nathan Manire is now based in New York City. For the past five years he has worked with a host of impressive clients in his day job as a designer, while also maintaining a presence in the illustration industry through his freelance work.

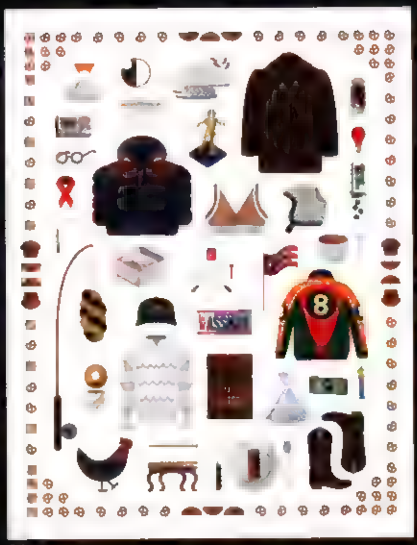
"I like to diversify and try new things. Being a designer allows me to experiment more with my illustration work," he says. "Some of my personal work has earned me commissions with big clients, such as Nike and *Wired*, so working in this way is really beneficial."

Alongside his more recent Dot Portrait work, Manire has created a range of urban landscape illustrations, many of which were inspired by the buildings in New York. He prefers to vary his creative process from project to project to keep things fresh.

"Some people have a style and a process that they stick to, but that's not how I work" he asserts. "My process is simple: stay confident, do research, be honest with myself and create something that will make people smile. All with a little help from good coffee and great music of course."

01 These Pixels are Making me Thirsty
This project was created with inkjet print and digital media for Manire to give away as presents. "I'm a big fan of the TV series *Seinfeld*, so I created a print of illustrated props from the show."

02 East 10th Street
Created entirely digitally, this piece was designed after Manire shot some images around his neighbourhood. "I love the buildings in the East Village, and I really wanted to recreate them in simplified illustrations," he says.



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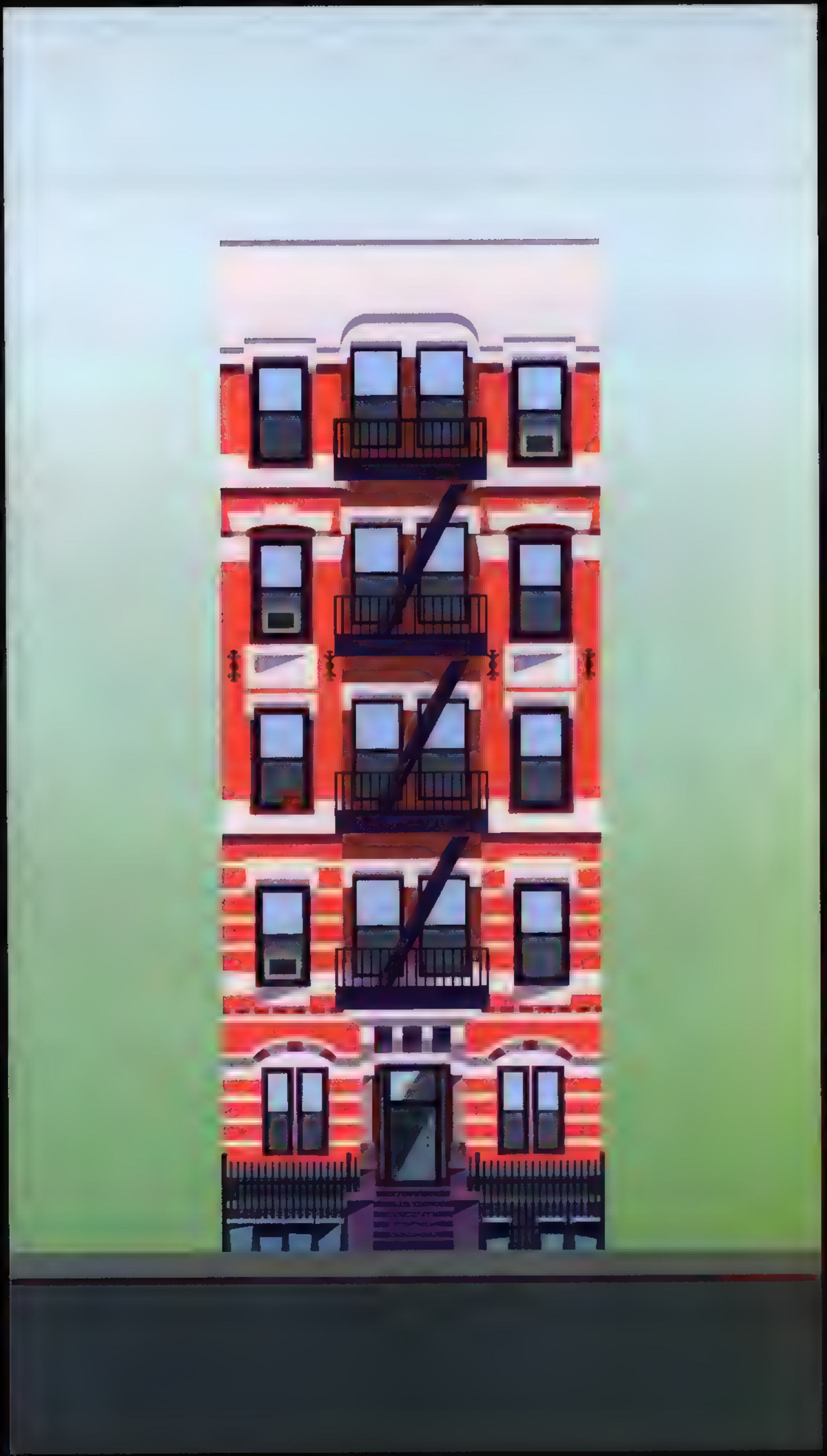

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Russian designer Alexandra Turban showcases a flavour of her humorous, pared-back style

"A beautiful, simple and elegant idea." This, Alexandra Turban says, is what she strives for in her work. Originally from Star City in Russia, Turban studied design at the University of Applied Sciences in Nuremberg, where she honed her skills in graphic design, illustration and CGI, and developed an impressive portfolio demonstrating equal talent in each of these mediums. In particular, she has a flair for branding – combining stylish, playful illustrations with striking typography.

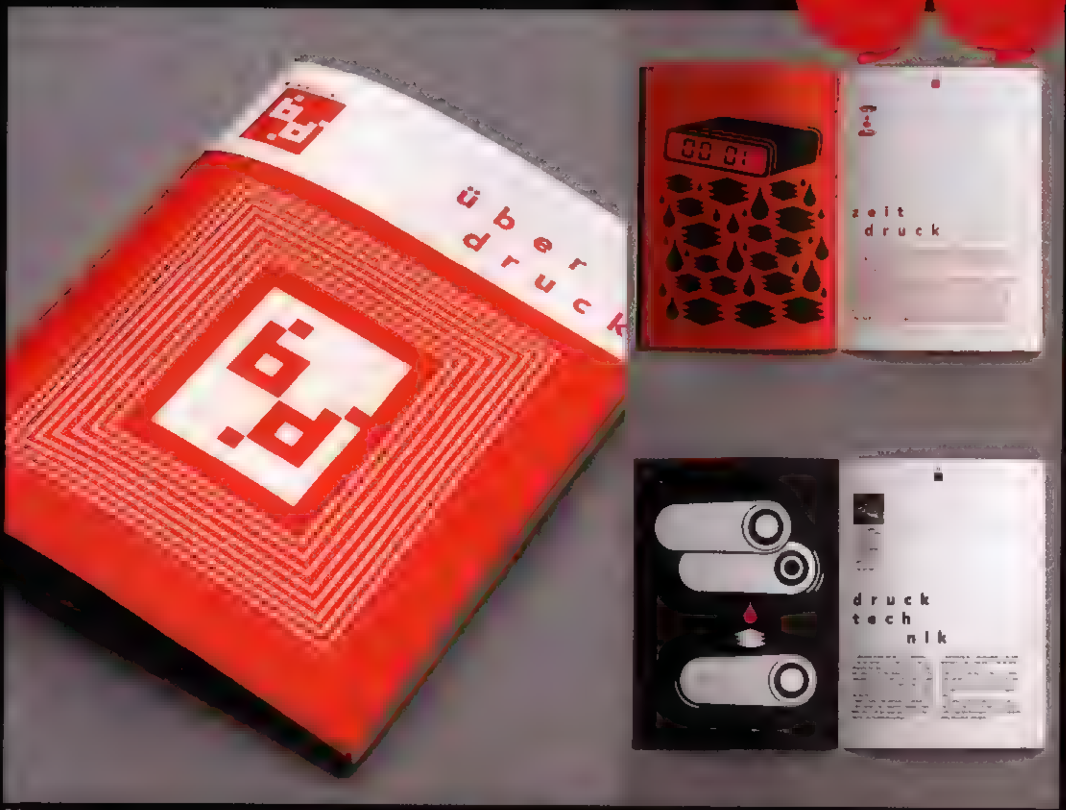
For her university thesis, Turban created branding for a fictional fast food restaurant specialising in filled pastry from all over the world, including ravioli, pelmeni, pierogi and briouats (03). "I named the restaurant 'The Inside'," Turban explains. "The idea was to emphasise the common feature of all the food – which was super-hot and with tasty fillings. That formed the basis for the entire concept and graphic style." We caught up with Turban for a quick chat to see what makes her tick.

CA: How did you get into design?
AT: My parents are artists, so I always had a kind of natural-born talent for drawing and being creative. However, I wanted to go down a more structured route and decided to study design.

CA: How would you describe your style?
AT: During my studies I fell in love with vector-based working, but I also like

01-02 Alexandra Turban designed the corporate identity and image brochure for **Bauerdruck**, a fictional print shop

> "It's all about finding the best design solution for a problem. When you succeed, it feels amazing"



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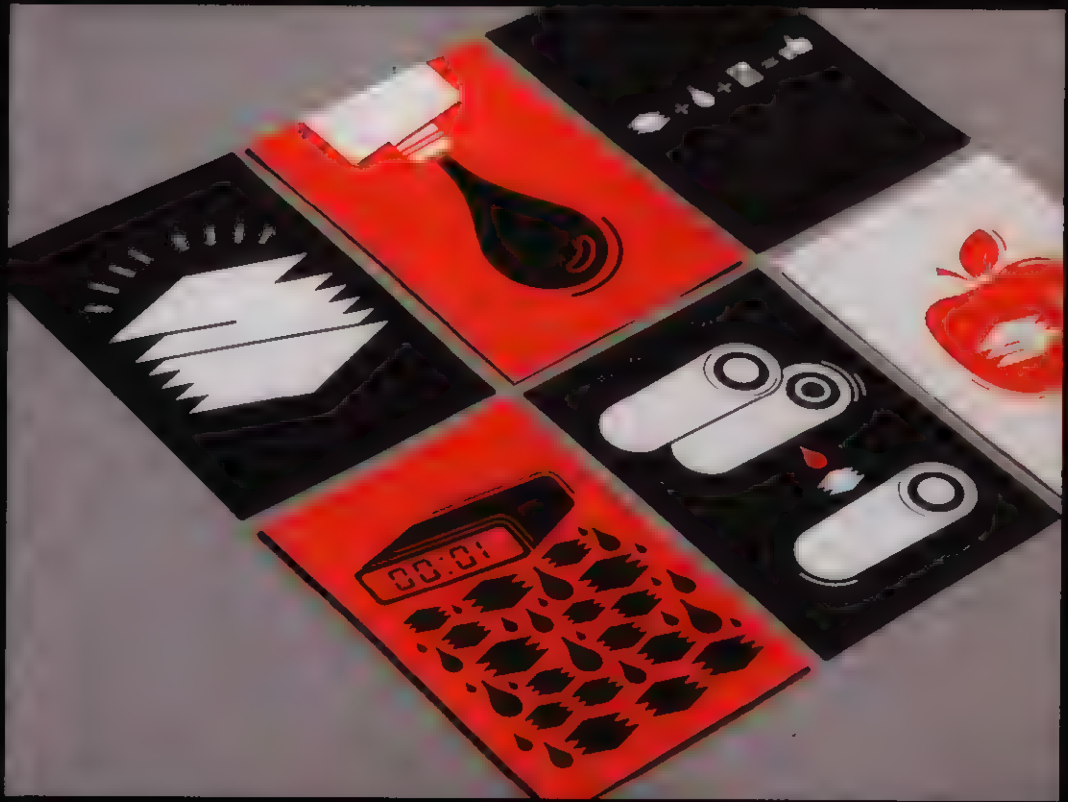

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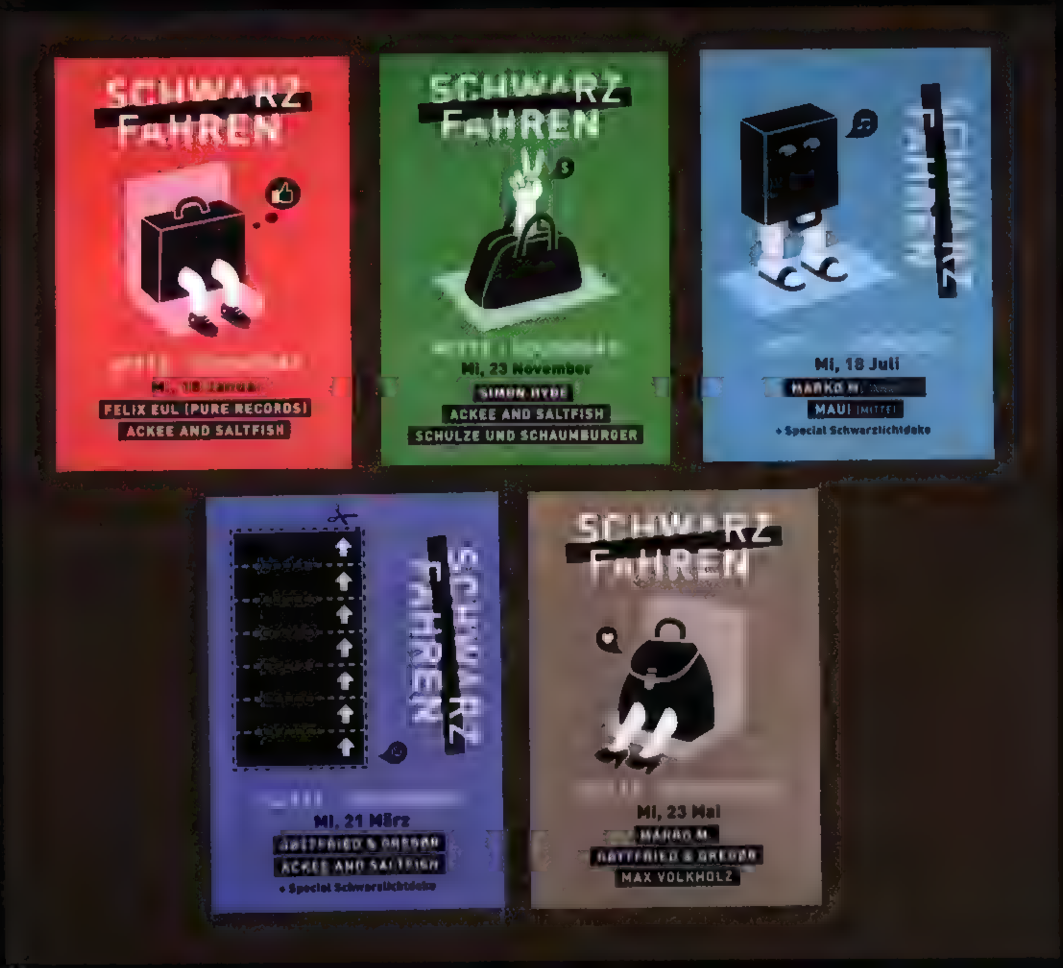
03 Vibrant flyers produced for an electronic club night, **Schwarzfahren**, which roughly translates as 'fare evasion'.

04 As part of Turban's bachelor thesis, she designed the branding for a fictional fast food restaurant named **The Inside**.


SCHWARZ FAHREN
FELIX EUL (PURE RECORDS)
ACKEE AND SALTFISH
SCHWARZ FAHREN
Mi, 23 November
SIMON HYDE
ACKEE AND SALTFISH
SCHULZE UND SCHAUMBURGER
SCHWARZ FAHREN
Mi, 18 Juli
MARKO M.
MAUI (MITTE)
+ Special Schwarzlichtdeko
SCHWARZ FAHREN
Mi, 21 März
GOTTFRIED & GREGOR
ACKEE AND SALTFISH
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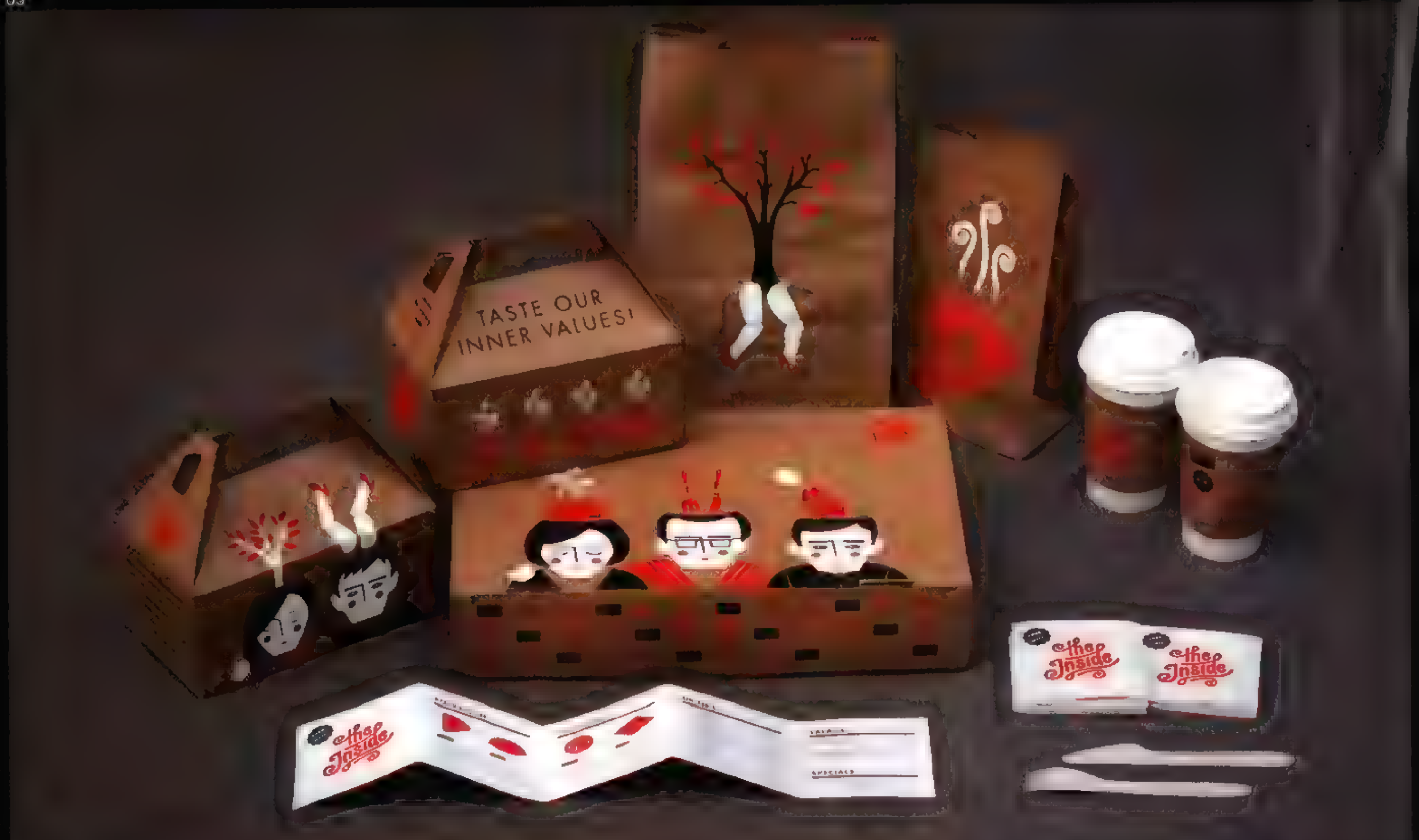
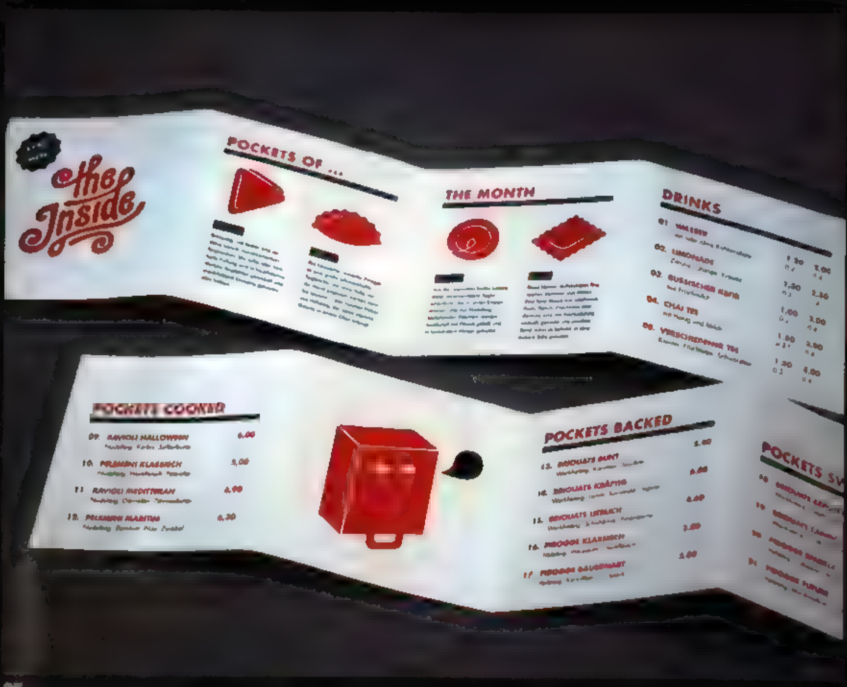

TASTE OUR INNER VALUES!
the Inside
the Inside
the Inside

04

05 The **menu card** for fictitious restaurant The Inside, which Turban designed for her university thesis.

06 A **screenprinted illustration** for a book project during Turban's course at the University of Applied Sciences.

07-08 Infographics for the **German Federal Cultural Foundation,** produced during an internship at Berlin studio anschlaege.de.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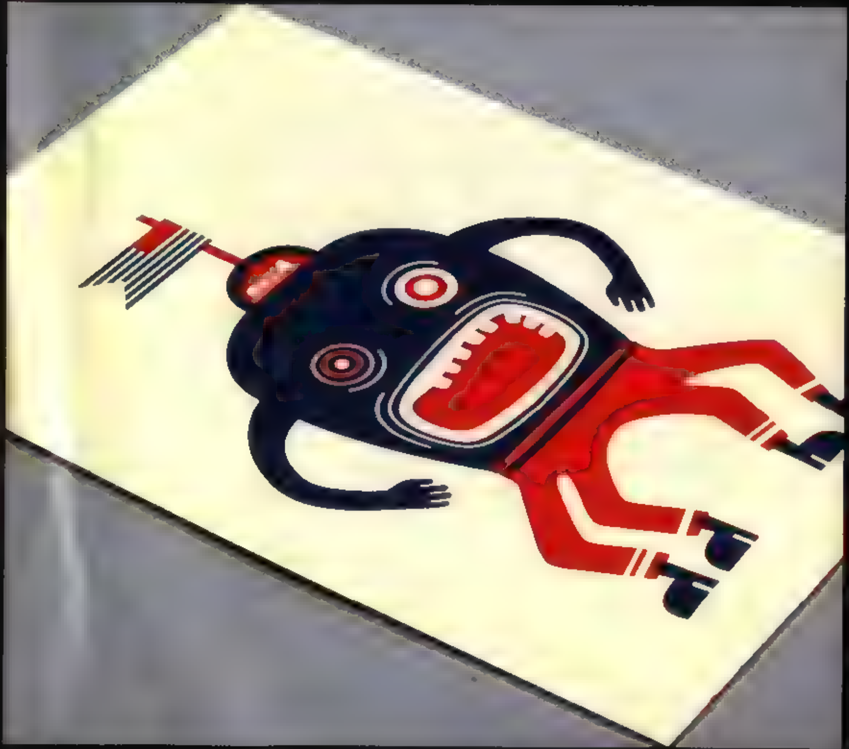

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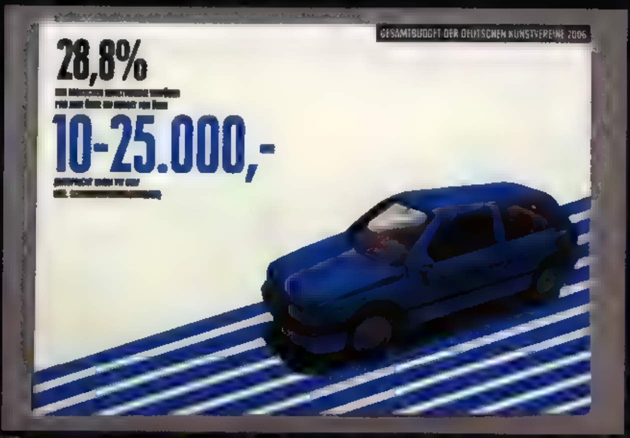

GESAMTBUDGET DER DEUTSCHEN KUNSTVEREINE 2006
28,8%
10-25.000,-

07

FIRMENSITZE DER 500 GRÖSSTEN DEUTSCHEN UNTERNEHMEN
VS. FRAUENANTEIL IN FÜHRUNGSPOSITIONEN

08

handmade drawing. My style is mostly clear and reduced, and sometimes a little playful.

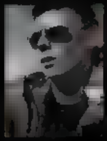
CA: What influences and inspires you when you create your images?
AT: I can always get inspirations from my *Luerzer's Archive* magazines, my favourite package design blog (www.thedieline.com), and most recently, on Behance. To name a designer: I love the pictograms of Stefan Dziallas and the illustrations of Luba Lukova.

CA: You created an eye-catching identity project for your university thesis project – was there a brief? How did you work towards it?
AT: The aim was to create modern, witty and intelligent branding. So I let the simple illustrations play with the concepts, which were 'inside' and 'inner values'. I wanted to give the customer space for personal interpretation and attract their attention in a humorous way.

CA: How long did each stage of the project take, and what was the most challenging aspect for you?
AT: Actually, the most challenging part was the beginning, when I was searching for the perfect topic for my bachelor thesis. I saw it as an opportunity to combine all of my design passions, while creating something new.

CA: What is the creative process like for you? Do you have a specific method that you use to manage your workflow?
AT: It's all about finding the best design solution for a problem. When you succeed, it feels amazing – although sometimes it can be quite hard. There seems to be no structured way to find great ideas.

www.alexandraturban.de



Jason Dowd
Location: Galway, Ireland
Job: Graphic designer and illustrator
www.behance.net/jasondowd

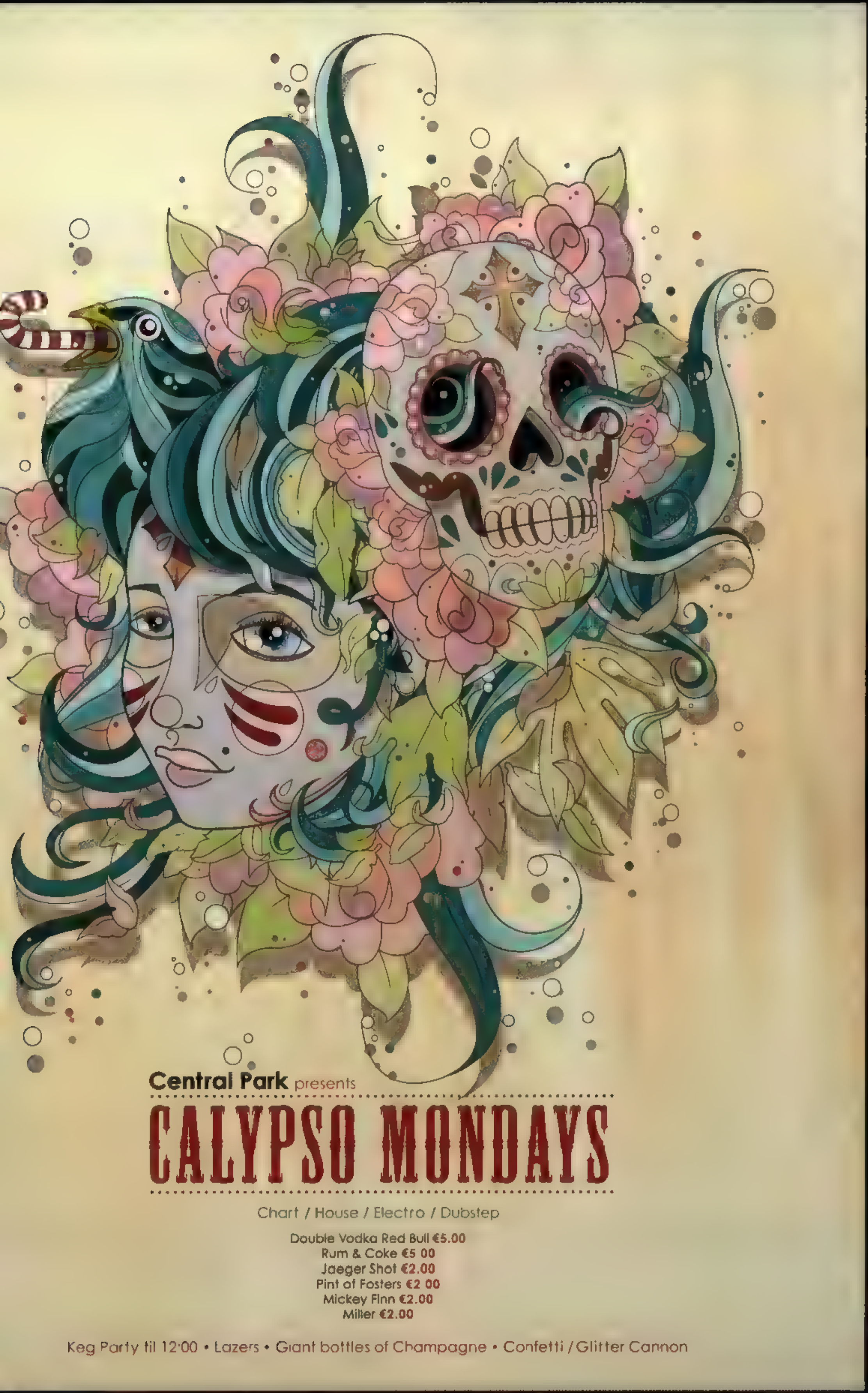
Jason Dowd has been drawing for as long as he can remember. "I spent a lot of time doodling during school and had little interest in most of my subjects," the 22-year-old admits, "so I decided to do a one-year art portfolio course at college, where I developed an incredible passion for it."

Despite enjoying "the whole fine art thing," it was during his time at college that Dowd became interested in graffiti. This led him to illustration, and he would draw and paint characters influenced by tattoo culture, psychedelic and lowbrow art.

Dowd later studied graphic design at university, which influenced him irreversibly: "It was here that I first learned to appreciate typography, and I discovered Illustrator and Photoshop, which changed my style enormously," he explains. "I was always a big fan of very clean, crisp and colourful characters, so from then on, I've always sketched my characters and coloured them digitally."

01 Calypso Mondays
Dowd was commissioned by a club in Galway to design a poster after it discovered his illustrations online. "I was going for a carnival, Day of the Dead-style illustration, which would still suit a nightclub," he says.

02 Fried Eggs and Dubsteppe
Dowd designed this poster for a gig organised by his friends: "I wanted to create a fun, eye-catching design. Most of the posters were ripped down and stolen well before the gig."



Central Park presents
CALYPSO MONDAYS
Chart / House / Electro / Dubstep
Double Vodka Red Bull €5.00
Rum & Coke €5.00
Jaeger Shot €2.00
Pint of Fosters €2.00
Mickey Finn €2.00
Miller €2.00
Keg Party til 12:00 • Lazers • Giant bottles of Champagne • Confetti / Glitter Cannon

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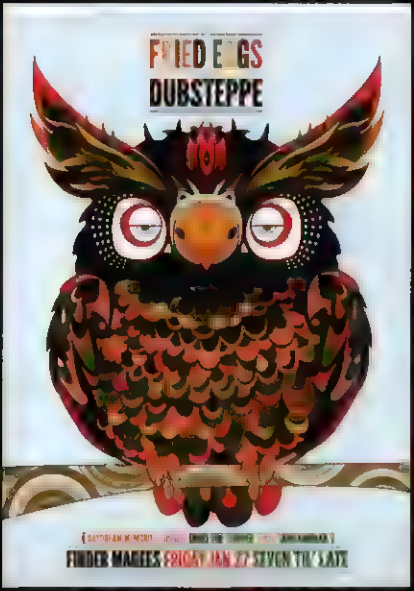

FRIED EGGS
DUBSTEPPE
FINDER MAGEES FRIDAY JAN 27 SEVEN TIL' LATE

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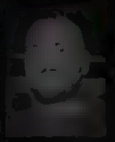


Simon Heard
Location: Brighton, UK
Job: Freelance designer and illustrator
www.sinagedesign.com

After graduating in 2000 with a BA in graphic design from Surrey Institute of Art and Design, Simon Heard spent some 10 years building up his experience before finally going freelance – something he refers to as "the best thing" he ever did.

Heard specialises in complicated illustrative designs that he describes as 'Hollywood graphic': "Big, bold and a touch on the crazy side," he laughs. Evidence of his childhood and teenage obsession with movies can be found in the three movie-inspired illustrative typefaces shown here – a personal project Heard has been working on for the last 10 months.

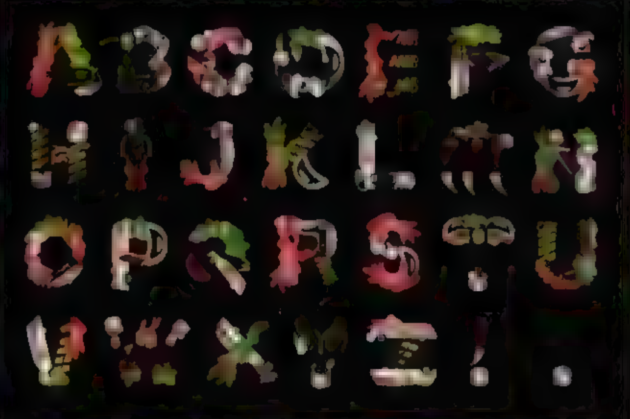
"My inner geek loves picking apart each movie, choosing objects and memorable scenes to create a moodboard before starting to design each letter. Each typeface takes a lot of patience and the process is like fitting together a jigsaw puzzle. The balance has to be just right between readability and good, eye-catching design."

Although Heard plans to create up to 50 movie A-Z libraries as a way to put the "fun back into typography," he's also incredibly busy professionally: he regularly works with design agencies, fashion labels, toy and product companies, and more.

01 Ghostbusters-inspired typeface
Another movie-inspired illustrative typeface, this time based on *Ghostbusters* from 1986.

02 Gremlins-inspired typeface
Heard uses these typefaces to break the ice with clients by asking them to guess which movie they're inspired by. This is based on Joe Dante's 1984 film *Gremlins*.

03 Jurassic Park-inspired typeface
This illustrative typeface takes its styling cues from Steven Spielberg's 1993 blockbuster *Jurassic Park*.



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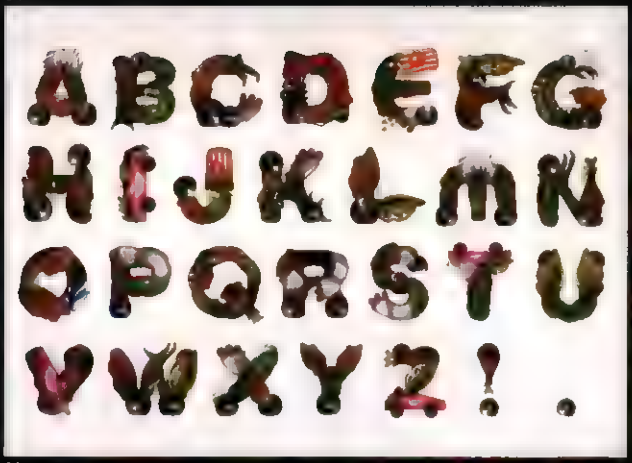

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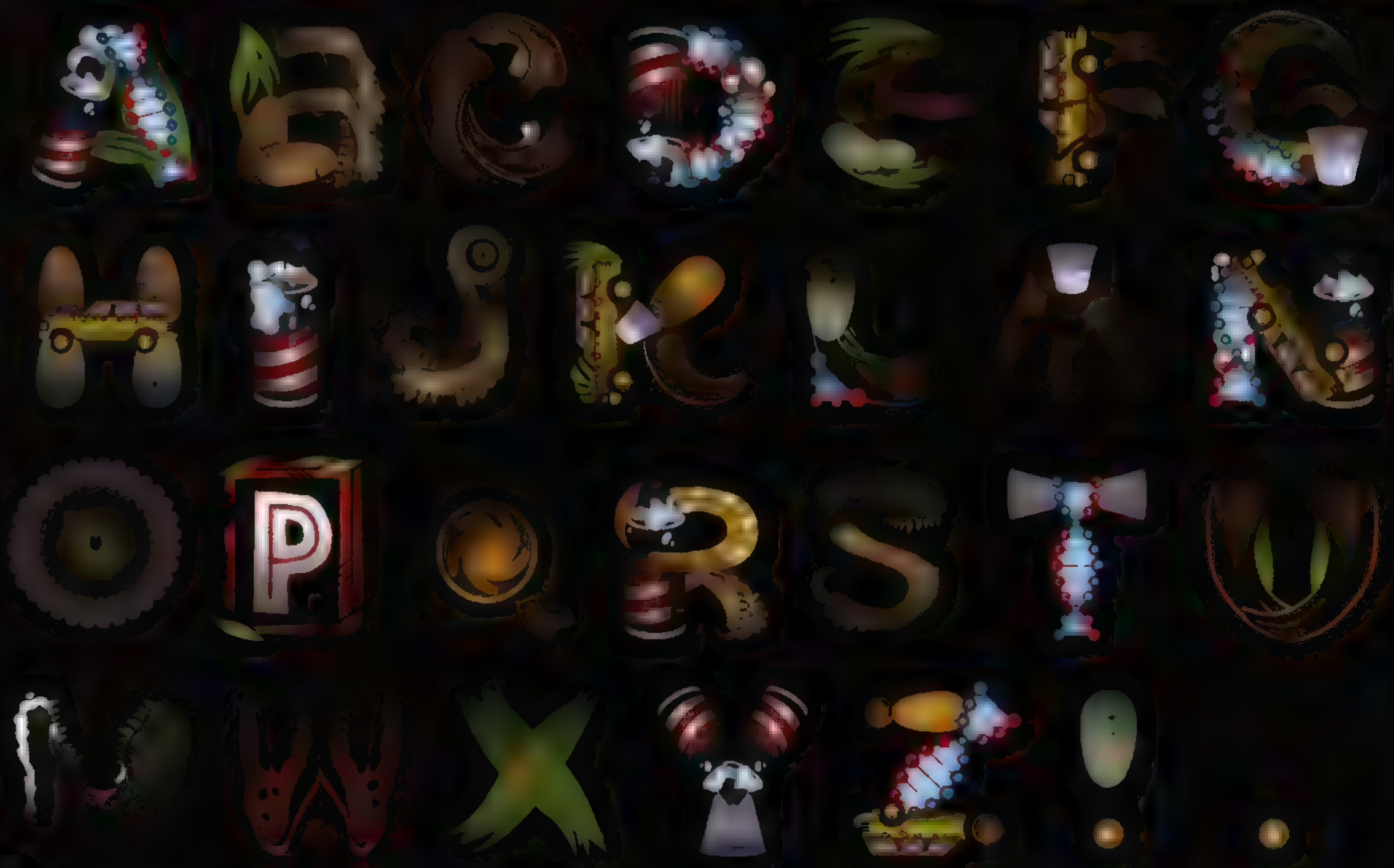

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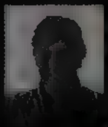


John Haslam
Location: Manchester, UK
Job: Illustrator and designer
www.johnhaslam illustration.com

Manchester-based creative John Haslam studied graphic design at college, and after a spell in advertising returned to what he calls his "first love" – illustration. "I've been fortunate to work for great clients and I've been very commercially active in my career so far," he smiles.

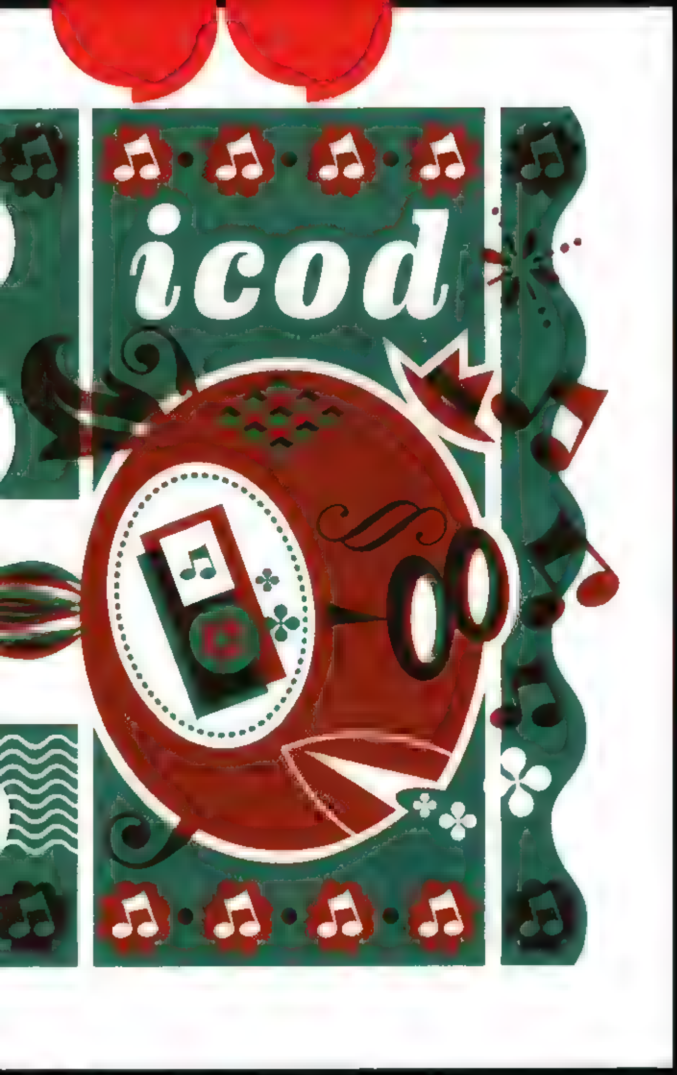
"I've always retained a love for illustration in design, inspired by Milton Glaser, Seymour Chwast and Pentagram here in the UK," adds Haslam. "I've been looking for a way of interpreting my personal work in a more graphic way and have been inspired by online stores and blogs." He recently opened his own store at www.punchyknucklehead.com, it being "a huge outlet for all manner of crazy, stupid and wonderful ideas."

The work on this page is a series of illustrations based on wordplay. "I'm fascinated with words, puns, and spoonerisms," he explains.

01 iCod
"This image was the inspiration for a whole series and is an old idea that kicked-started the thought process into creating other ideas based on fish," says Haslam. "Why? I've no idea! I think it was a good vehicle to expand on. The idea of iCod comes from Jonah and the Whale; in this case an iPod is swallowed."

02 Fishtank
"Again a play on words or meaning," says Haslam, "the idea being the bowl is the fish's world and it's being compromised by warfare."

> "I've been looking for a way of interpreting my personal work in a more graphic way"



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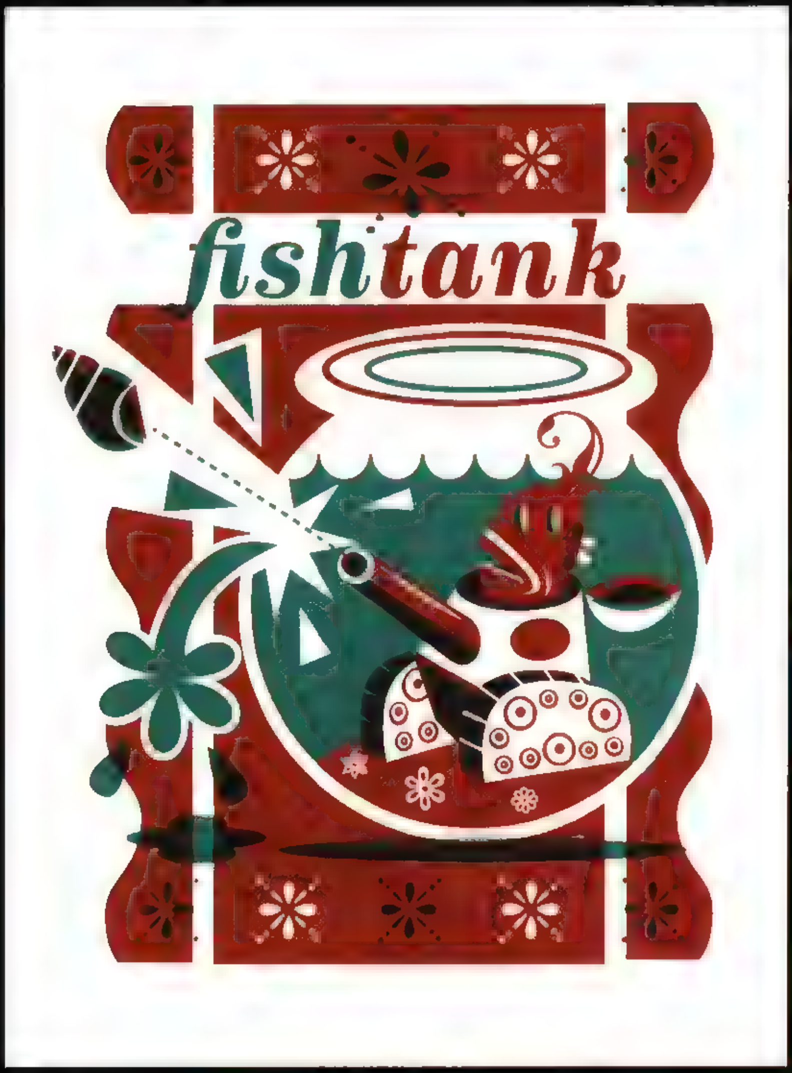

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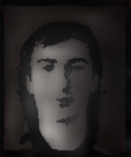


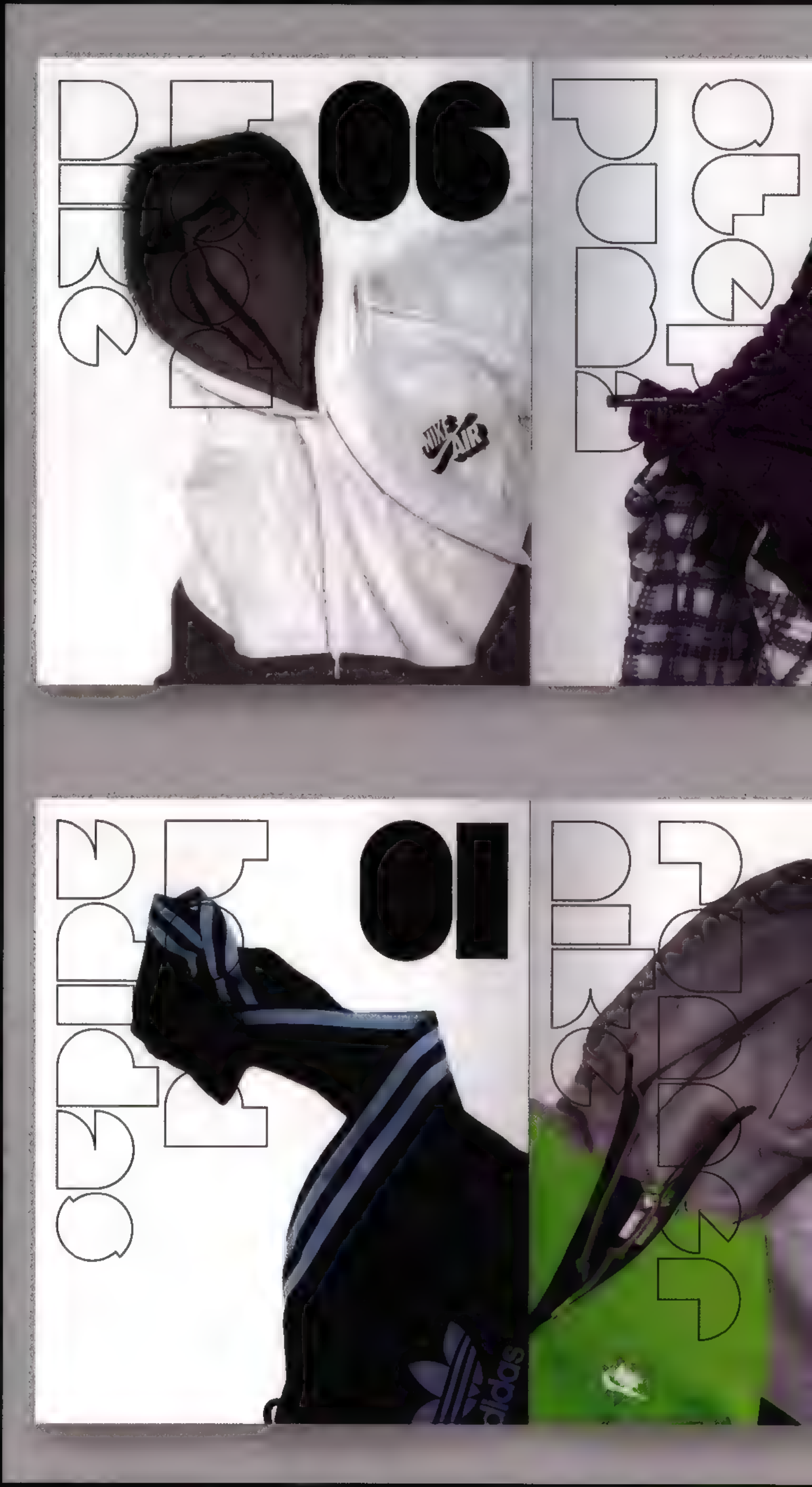
Half-pipes and pipe dreams: Matt Keers on realising his skate-inspired design ambition

Manchester-born Matt Keers knew from an early age he wanted a career in design, having spent his youth immersed in skate culture and the inspiring art world surrounding it. He studied design at nearby Stockport College, followed by a graphic arts at Liverpool John Moores University. During this time, he started taking on placements in London and the north west, which led to freelance work and a portfolio of his own clients.

Keers contributed to a number of exciting, high-profile exhibitions. We chatted to him to find out about his influences, inspirations and how a childhood love of skateboarding led him to a career in graphic design.

Computer Arts: How did you get started in graphic design?
Matt Keers: I enjoyed art and design classes at school and knew fairly early on that I wanted a job that involved that in some way. Throughout my youth I was into skateboarding – the art, design and fashion side especially – and I became inspired by the clean vector graphics and logos used on decks and skatewear. From that starting point, I then branched out and became interested in other types of design.

CA: What else do you take your inspiration from?
MK: Thinking about it, my primary influences are geometric shapes,



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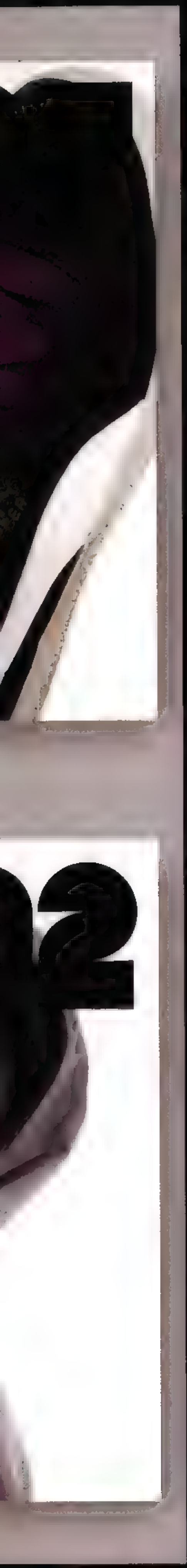
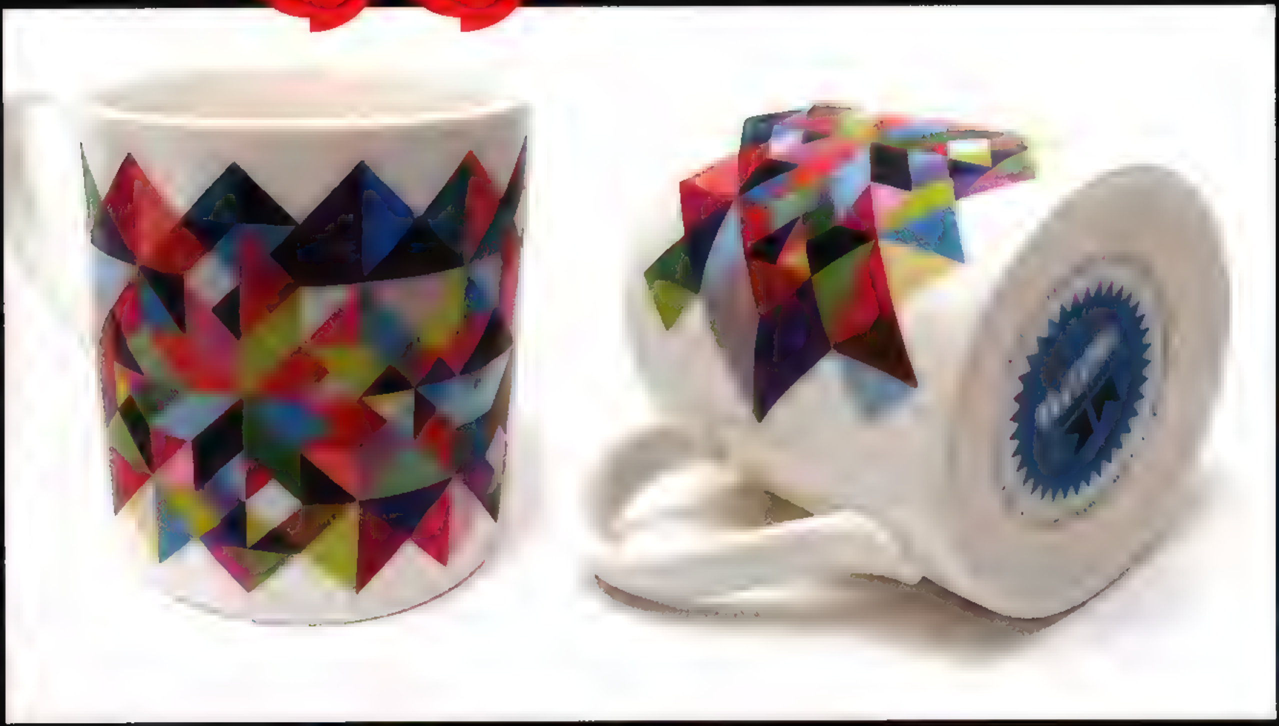


> I became inspired by the clean vector graphics and logos used on decks and clothing

01 Keers worked on the branding for shoe and clothing shop **Ran.** "I wanted to create a bespoke new font with a geometric style. I'm pleased with the way the typography looks with the photography."

02 **Tutti Frutti** mug features a graphic pattern that was created by Keers in Illustrator. "The inspiration basically came from designing geometric patterns just for the fun of it."

03 Keers created this cover as a re-design for classic work, ***Le Morte d'Arthur***, in Illustrator and Indesign. "I wanted to bring a fresh look to this classic story."



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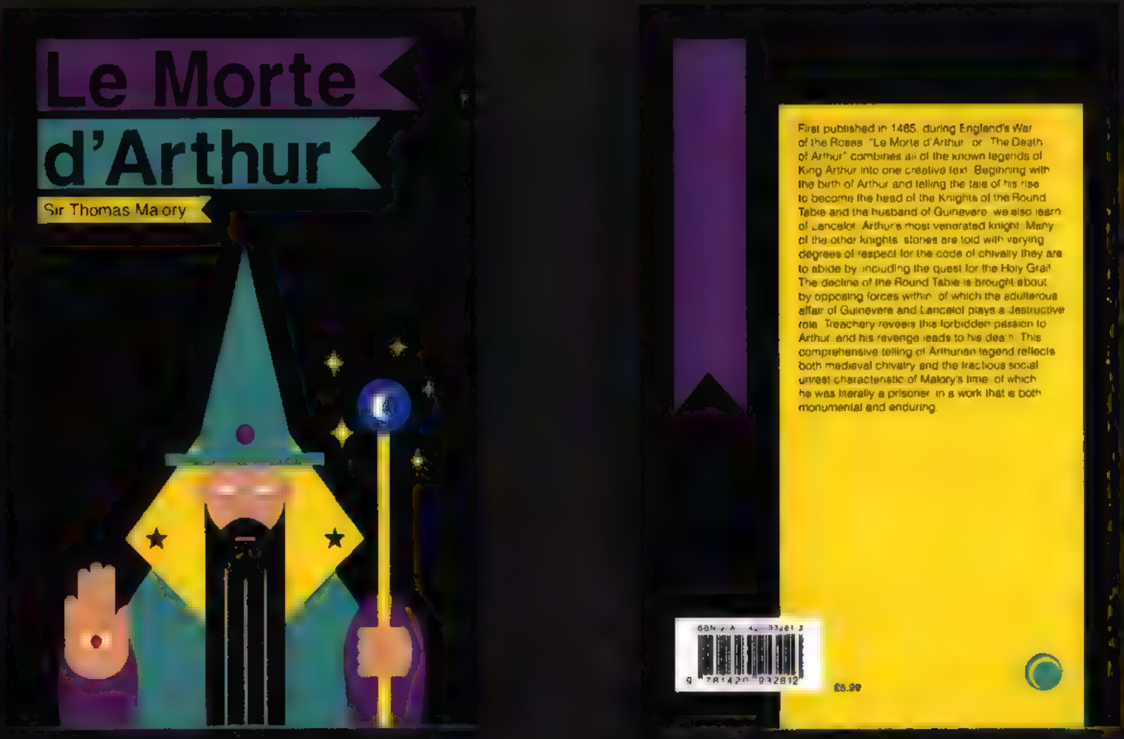
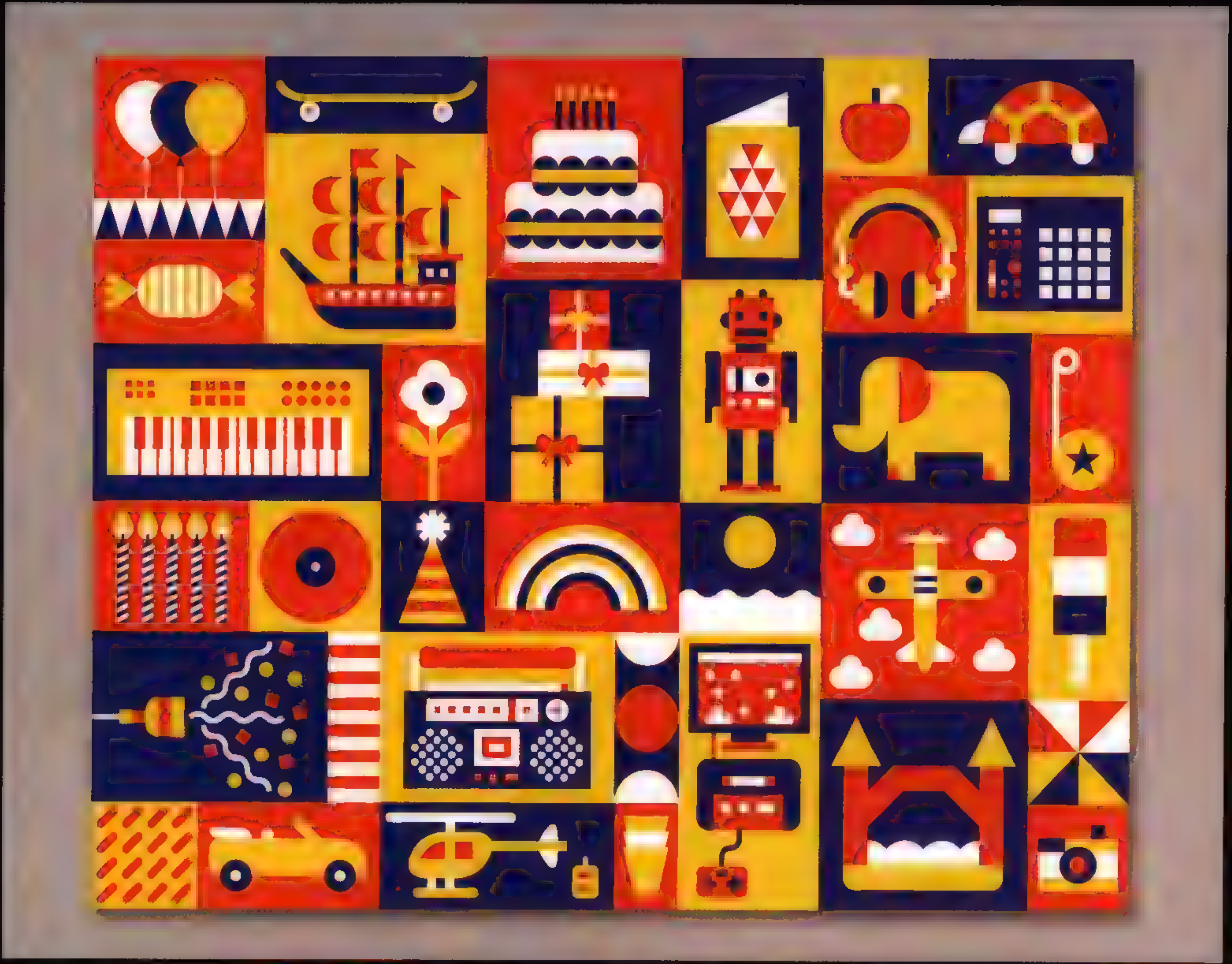


First published in 1485, during England's War of the Roses, "Le Morte d'Arthur", or "The Death of Arthur" combines all of the known legends of King Arthur into one creative text. Beginning with the birth of Arthur and telling the tale of his rise to become the head of the Knights of the Round Table and the husband of Guinevere, we also learn of Lancelot, Arthur's most venerated knight. Many of the other knights' stories are told with varying degrees of respect for the code of chivalry they are to abide by, including the quest for the Holy Grail. The decline of the Round Table is brought about by opposing forces within, of which the adulterous affair of Guinevere and Lancelot plays a destructive role. Treachery reveals this forbidden passion to Arthur, and his revenge leads to his death. This comprehensive telling of Arthurian legend reflects both medieval chivalry and the fractious social unrest characteristic of Malory's time, of which he was literally a prisoner, in a work that is both monumental and enduring.

03

04 Briefed to create a canvas for Salford-based studio **Raw**'s fifth birthday exhibition, Keers went for a "fun, birthday theme".



04

›colours, simplicity of design and the relationship between these things.

I was really inspired by 60s design and art initially, and Swiss-style creatives like Ellsworth Kelly and Sol LeWitt – they really represent this approach for me. Nowadays, anything past or present with similar ideals appeals to me.

CA: What software and other equipment do you tend to use to produce your work?
MK: A Mac, Adobe Creative Suite, a moleskin sketchbook and a Uni Pin Fineline pen.

CA: What would you say has been your creative highlight to date?
MK: My highlights so far include contributing to exhibitions like *Nike78*, *Artcrank* in London and *Raw 5* in Manchester. I had a lot of fun working on those projects and they allowed me a lot of creative freedom.

CA: Have you ever had any creative disasters? How did you learn from it?
MK: In a panic, just days before a major project deadline, I ditched an idea I was working on and went with something new, which involved making a short video using software I had never used before. After a fair few hours on the job, there was a power-cut and, having forgotten to save my work, I lost everything. An important lesson learned!

CA: What do you love most about your job?
MK: I love seeing an idea take shape from conception to completion. I also enjoy the variety of work and, of course, I enjoy the actual process of what I do.

CA: What are your aims for the future?
MK: My main aim is to continue enjoying what I do. Of course, I also want to keep learning and developing as a designer as much as possible, but all the while enjoying my work.

www.mattkeers.co.uk

Francisco Estevez-Breton
Location: Miami, USA
Job: Graphic designer
www.estevezbreton.com

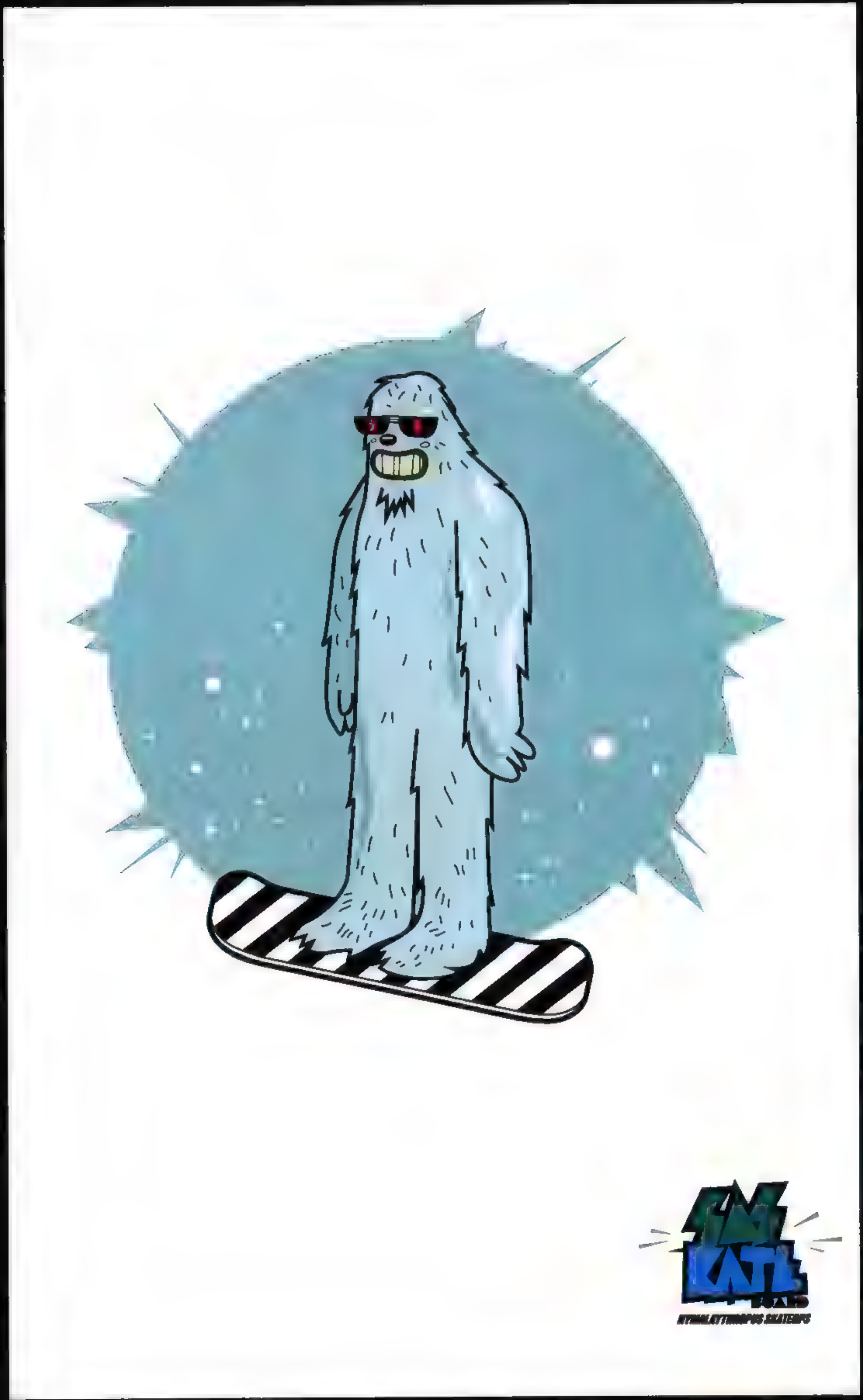
Following years of exploration in illustration, geometry and typography, plus a degree in graphic design from Jorge Tadeo Lozano University in Bogotá, Colombia, Francisco Estevez-Breton was keen to explore the bold new world of animation.

His work includes LIV-Presenta – a funky music TV filler for LIV/ Discovery Communications Latin America. Clean design, flashes of strong colour and solid black and white structure are characteristic of his style.

"I take inspiration from urban and pop art, sci-fi, cities like Berlin and New York, and even cartoons," he explains. "I've also always admired the artwork of Catalan artist Joan Miró."

Estevez-Breton, who is an advocate of Photoshop and Illustrator for design, and After Effects and Cinema 4D for animation projects, says that his most prized possession is his Wacom tablet. "I've not used a mouse in a long time – my Wacom tablet is one of my best friends," he laughs.

01 Sasquatch
Estevez-Breton's penchant for creating characters can be seen in Sasquatch, originally a character from an unsuccessful pitch. "It was just a sketch, but I decided to evolve it as a personal project," he says.



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Tom Veiga
Location: Curitiba, Brazil
Job: Artist and designer
www.seriewaves.com

Tom Veiga was living in the city, away from the sea, when he was hit with a wave of inspiration: if he couldn't go surfing, he'd channel his passion for the sport in another direction.

"I was looking for a way to be more connected to surf culture," Veiga says, "when I discovered that there are artists who produce work focusing on waves. I really identified with this and began drawing waves as a hobby."

The result is Waves Series – vivid, cubist-inspired works imbued with a sense of sun, sea and surf. When Veiga began the project, he was working as an art director at a digital agency in his native Brazil, designing websites and creating online campaigns. Every spare moment he had – evenings, weekends, his lunch hour – he would spend drawing, gradually developing his vibrant, dynamic style.

Veiga's work always begins life on paper, before it's scanned into Illustrator and later worked on in Photoshop. "I try to use the minimum amount of strokes possible, while always working with lots of colour and movement," he explains.

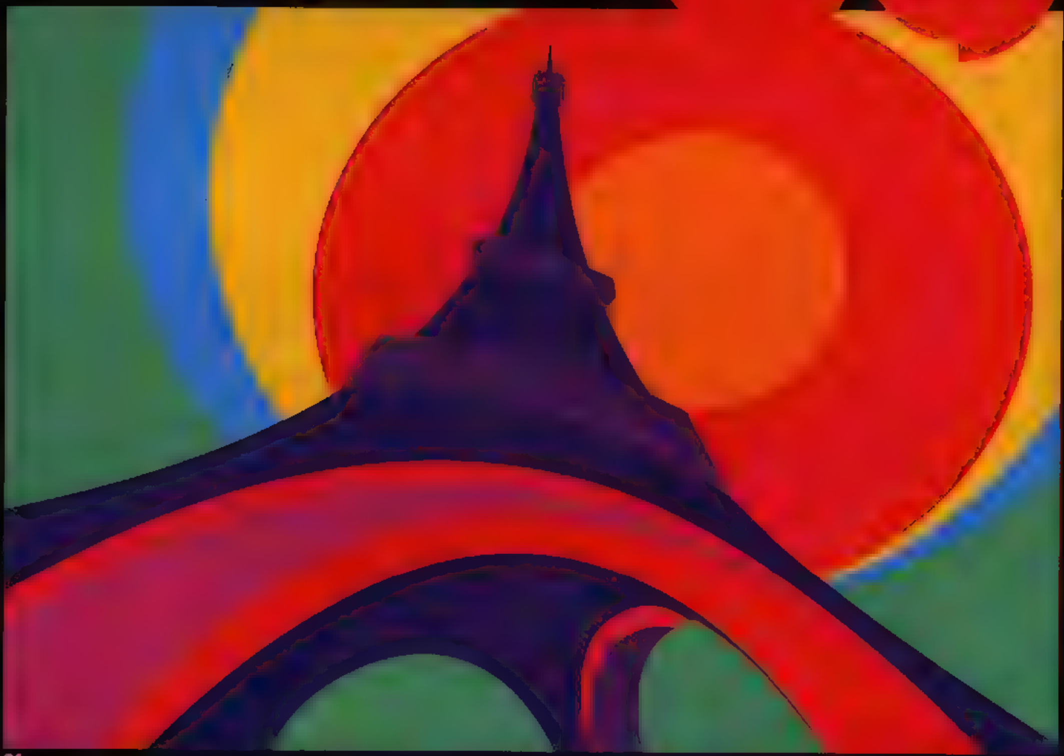
His minimalist style has attracted the attention of surfing brand Billabong, which asked him to design his own range of clothing, and a series of exhibitions in South America and Europe followed. The project was such a success that Veiga left his job at the agency to focus entirely on his art.

> " I try to use the minimum amount of strokes possible, while always working with lots of colour and movement "

01 Torre Eiffel
Inspired by a trip to Paris, Veiga created this piece showing the Effiel Tower awash with colour.

02 Good Day
Good Day is an example of Tom Veiga's striking use of colour, a theme present throughout his portfolio.

03 Trestles
Veiga created this piece for California-based surfing brand Reef.



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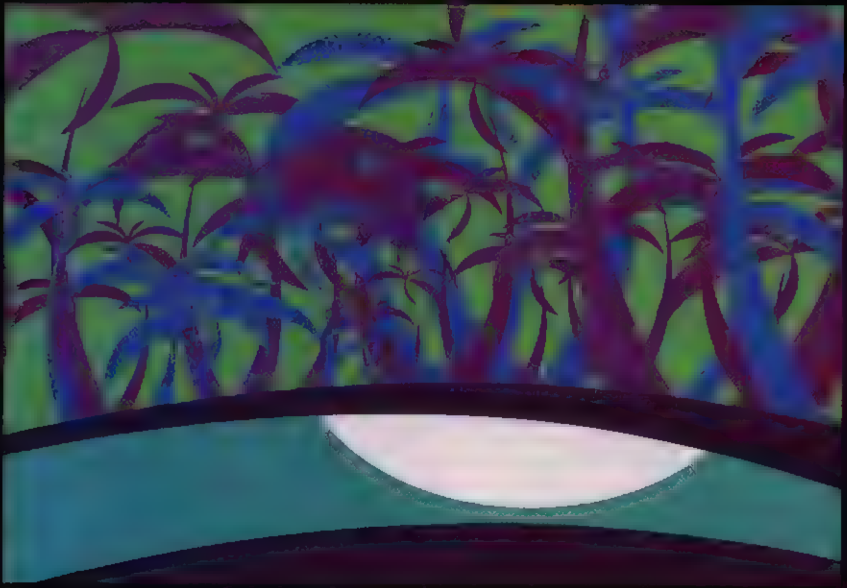

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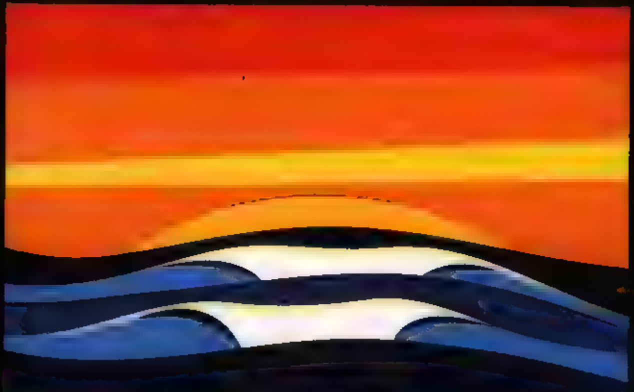

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Stavros Kypraios
Location: Athens, Greece
Job: Graphic designer and illustrator
www.faze.gr

For Stavros Kypraios, research is key. The Greek designer and illustrator is a stickler for detail, and believes that inspiration lies in the finer points of a brief. "I want to know as much as possible from the client," he says. "I'm interested in finding out the small details that will help me come up with a story. Once I understand the brief, I start researching the various aspects of the project and ask myself questions: Who is this aimed at? What's the product talking about? How do similar products communicate their message?"

Kypraios studied graphic and multimedia design at the Technological Education Institute of Piraeus. He spent two years working as an in-house graphic designer in the advertising industry, before beginning his freelance career under the name 'Faze'. Kypraios is also a co-owner of Greek design studio Nevertheless.

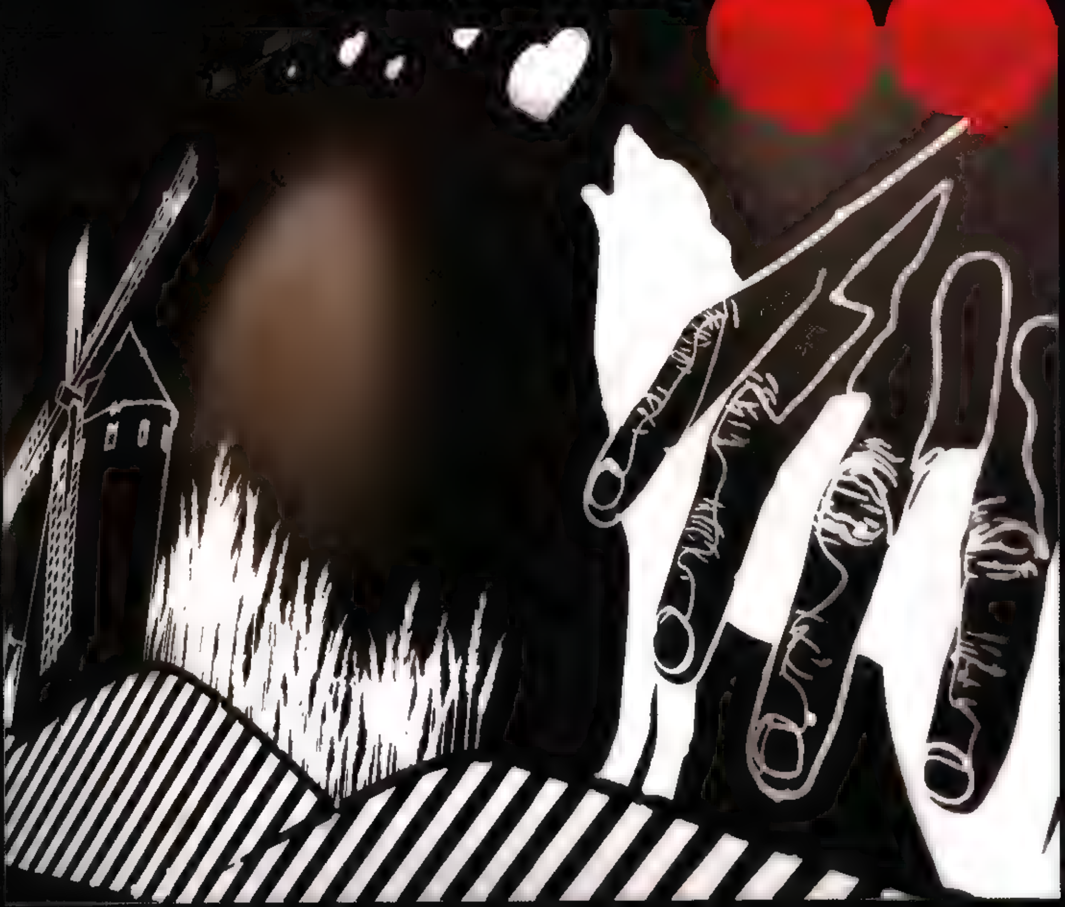
His work has a narrative feel, incorporating references to history, culture and ancient civilisations. Geometry, repeat patterns and striking typography also inform his style. "It's quite illustrative," he says, "but I always want to challenge myself to try new forms and techniques. I'm influenced by the motives, symmetry and repetition in nature and everyday life. Inspiration is out there – and it's everywhere."

> I want to know as much as possible from the client. I'm interested in finding out the small details that will help me come up with a story

01 A Cloud in the Night
Kypraios joined the Terra Nueva project at Terra Petra in 2011 with an installation called A Cloud In The Night. Inspired by the words of the Pavlos Pavlidis song Theristes, he created a cloud made of 700 ping-pong balls, surrounded by stencil wall graphics (pictured) in the venue's food bar. "I wanted to point out the parallel between the travel of a cloud in the mysterious night sky and human nature, which is full of curiosity and paradoxes," he explains.

02 Symbolsynthesis
Inspired by Maori tattoos, geometrical shapes and symbols, this vector piece was designed by Kypraios for use as a T-shirt graphic.

03 Panorama Graphics
Kypraios was commissioned to create the identity graphics for Panorama 2012, a design conference in Athens that invites designers to showcase their best projects. "I was inspired by binoculars, and how they help us to observe far away things," he says. "It's a metaphor for watching the speakers present their projects."



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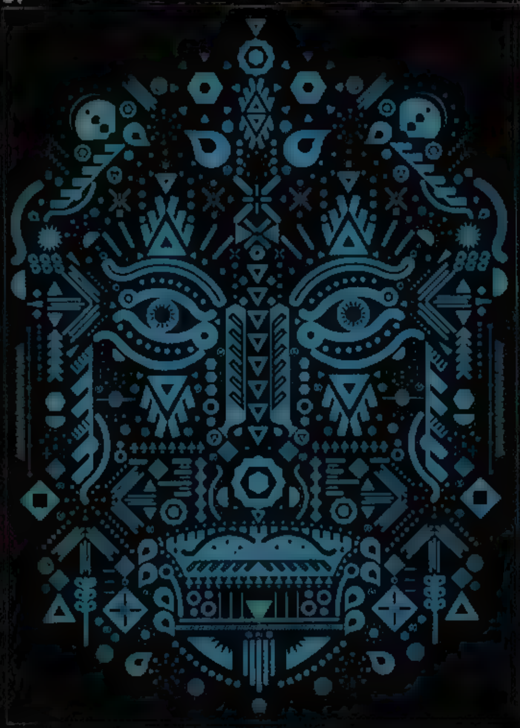

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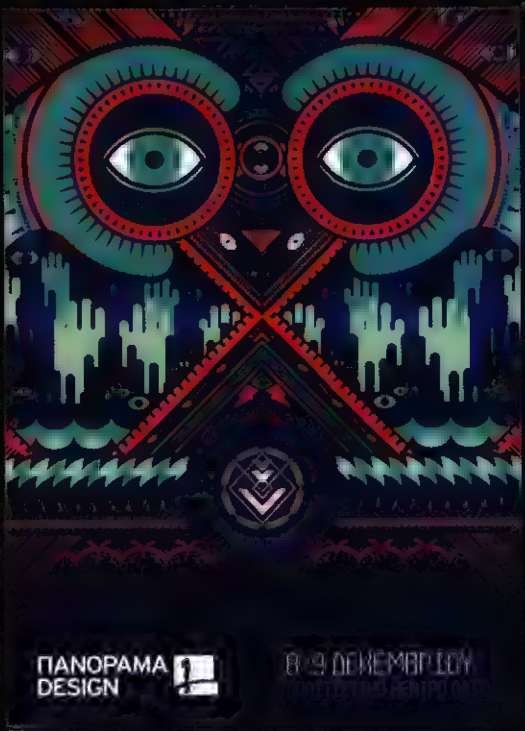

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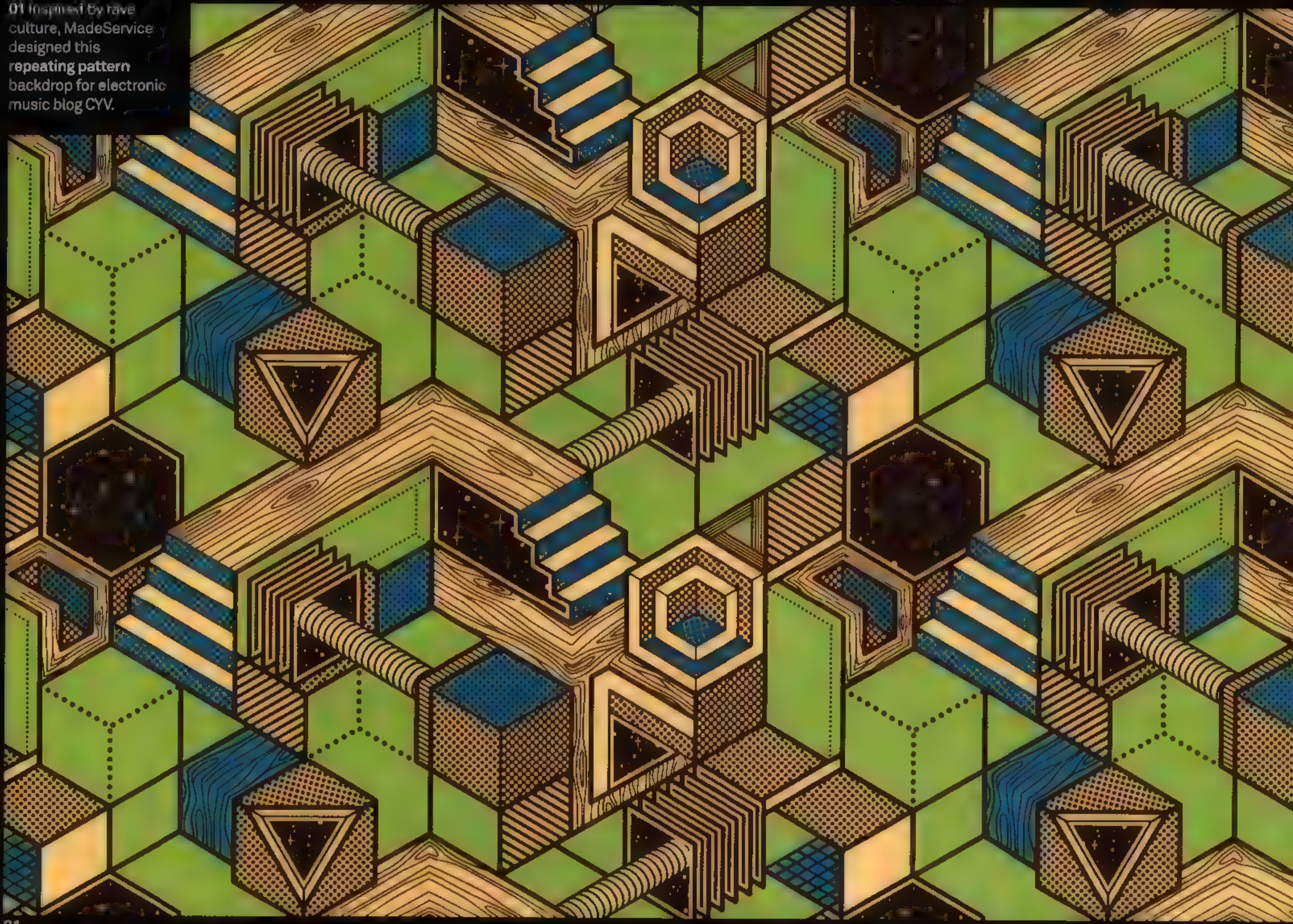


01 Inspired by rave culture, MadeService designed this **repeating pattern** backdrop for electronic music blog CYV.

REPEAT PATTERNS

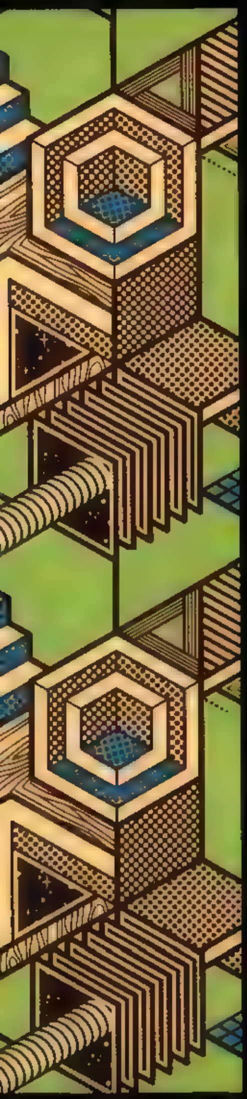
DESIGNER MadeService
LOCATION San José, USA
PROJECT CYV repeating pattern
www.madeservice.net

One part Matt Yerman, one part Jackie Ngo, MadeService is a small California-based graphic design studio with a strong folio of work. "We love bringing illustration into our projects," says Yerman. "It adds a fun quality, which juxtaposes with graphic design to create something that can be visually pleasing on multiple levels."

The pair created a repeating pattern to function as the background of electronic music blog CYV. "We wanted to express the drug-induced realities of rave culture in a light-hearted manner," explains Yerman, who lists MC Escher, psychedelic work of the 70s and geometric patterns as the duo's inspiration. Created in Illustrator, the piece started out as an isometric pattern based on a grid system. "I then experimented with breaking up the existing pattern by adding and subtracting elements. I also used halftone patterns via this nifty Illustrator plugin I have," he says. "A few alignment irregularities came about that took a bit of work, but I enjoy the impossible shapes and sequences."

Does he see illustration and graphic design as separate disciplines? "The boundaries seem to be blurring," he reflects. "On one side, you have the layout and organisation of content to clearly communicate an idea; on the other you've got an illustration to visually reinforce the idea. So a poster loaded with information, for example, can still contain a strong illustration aspect to it."

> We wanted to express the drug-induced realities of rave culture in a light-hearted manner



SUN-SOAKED TYPOGRAPHY

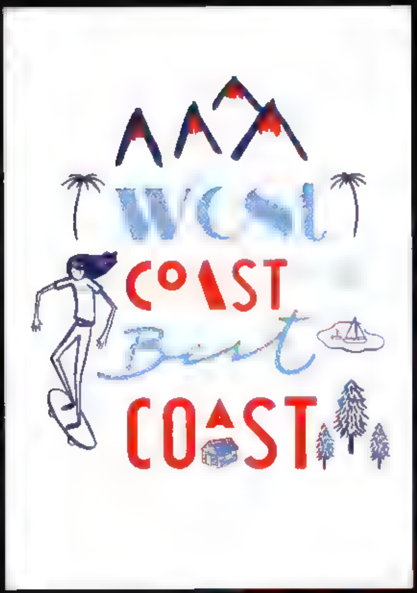
DESIGNER Pattern
LOCATION Poketon
PROJECT T-shirt designs
www.studiopatten.com

Design studio Patten has tapped into the carefree outdoors lifestyle of the USA's west coast to produce a trio of T-shirts for LA-based web retailer Poketo, despite being thousands of miles away in landlocked Madrid. "To define a country where you don't live and have never visited isn't easy," admits Aida Novoa, who makes up one half of Patten with Carlos Egan. "From the very beginning they gave us lot of freedom to create."

The pair's designs – Los Angeles, The Cyclist and West Coast Best Coast – all feature custom lettering that blends with illustration to evoke ideas of sun-soaked relaxation and leisure.

"Some of the letters were handmade and retouched in Illustrator, while others are the result of mixing typographies," Egan explains. "This led to a striking effect, even a little bit weird, with parts of monolinear typographies added to gestural strokes."

For The Cyclist, illustration takes a greater role so the lettering is more uniform. Novoa elaborates: "The words 'Los Angeles' were hand-designed first and then vectorised, as we wanted to polish the lines and obtain a design with volume that was expressive, with a funny tone." West Coast Best Coast, meanwhile, represents the diversity found along the length of the Pacific shores, combining hand-drawn elements with a range of modified faces. "We were inspired by American posters," Novoa says.



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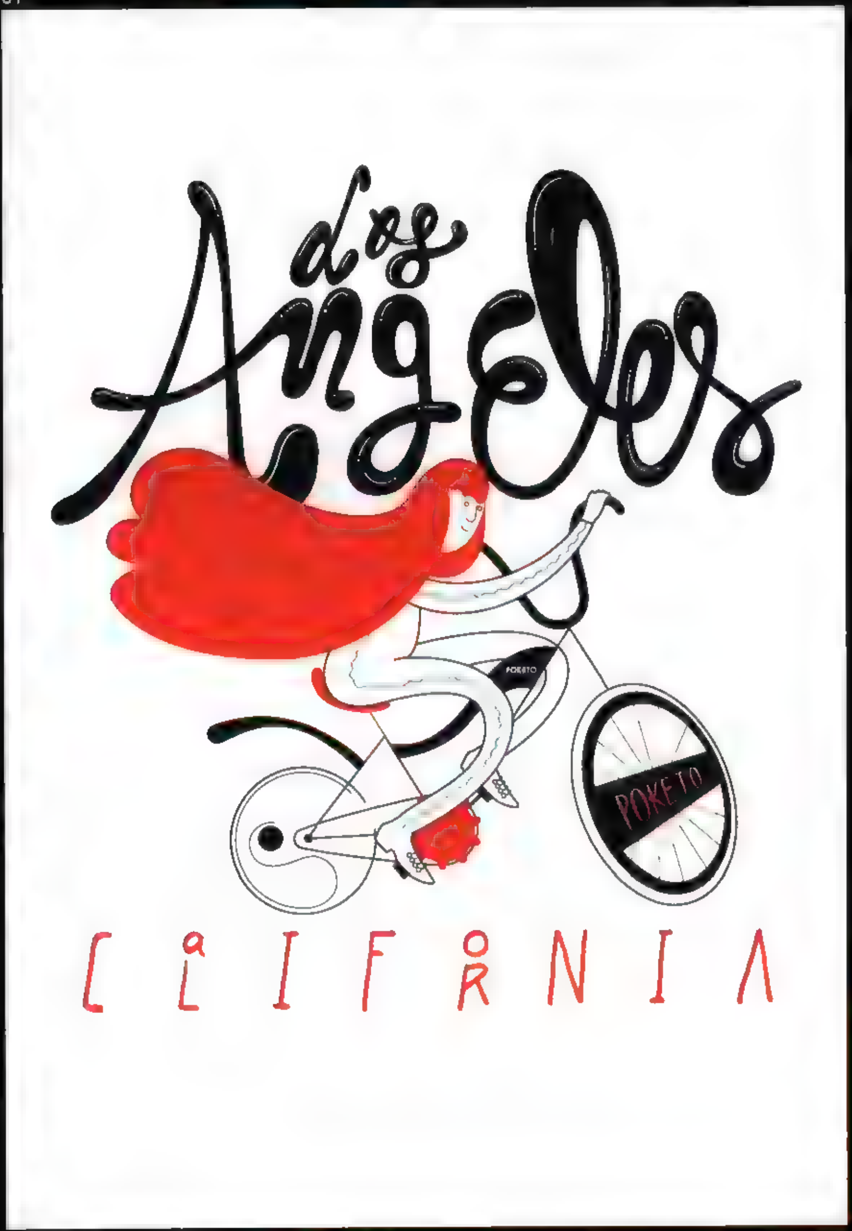
01 The illustrative elements in **West Coast Best Coast** were hand-drawn with Indian ink and then vectorised using Illustrator.



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02 For **The Cyclist** Poketo wanted the image of a bicycle associated with Los Angeles. "It's a positive illustration about using that mode of transport in that city," explains Carlos Egan.

01 Vanallemeersch drew and re-drew **Reading For Everyone** around 15 times. "Once it was planned, I finished it in no time," he says.

02 Tofu was inspired by 80s Italian comics. "Balancing the elements outside the circle with those inside the circle was tough," he admits.

03 Vanallemeersch is pleased with the way his **advertorial for Lexus** features a lot of little details, but doesn't look chaotic.

MODERNIST POP

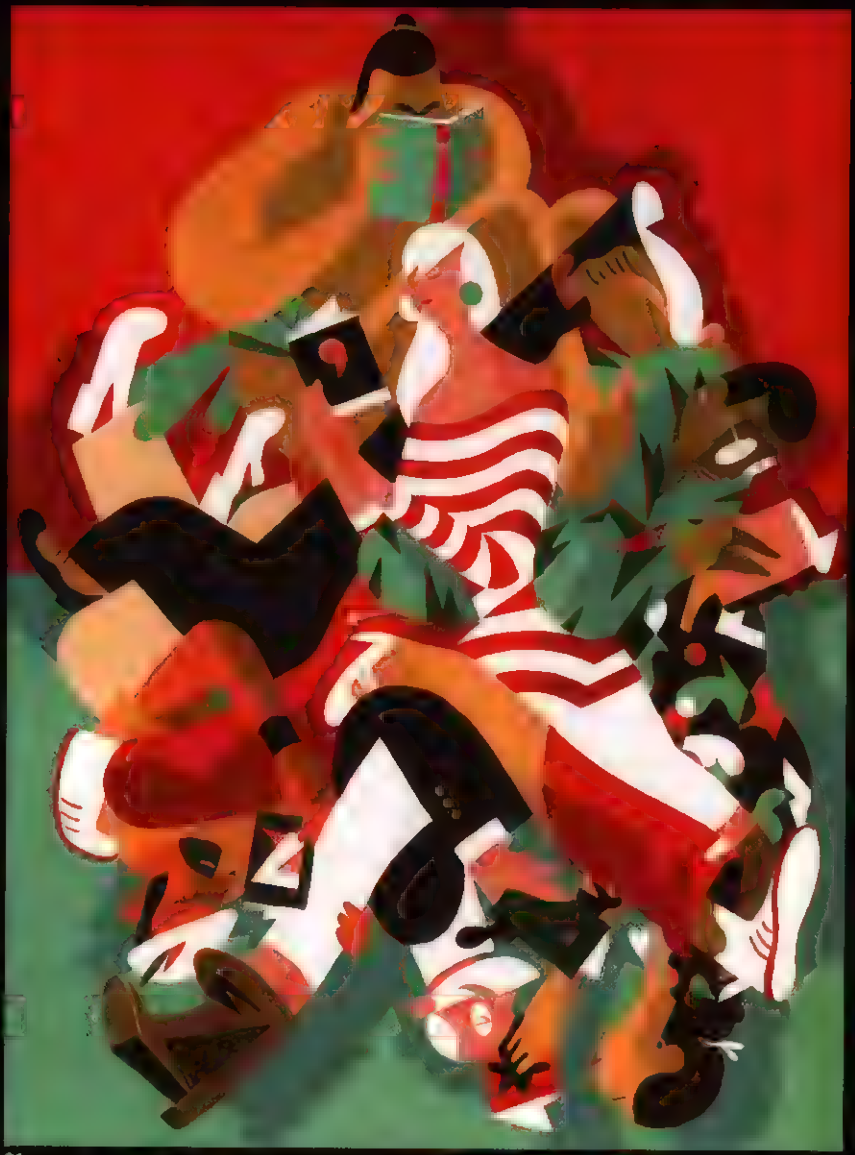
DESIGNER Sam Vanallemeersch
LOCATION Antwerp, Belgium
PROJECT Reading For Everyone, Tofu, Lexus advertorial
www.kolchoz.com

Illustrator Sam Vanallemeersch operates under not one, but two pseudonyms. As Kolchoz, he takes a graphic design approach to his work, composing with coloured shapes to create form and subject as equal. As Sovchoz, he does the opposite: drawing images from his subconscious with pen and paper.

Reading For Everyone was created as a cover illustration for a library newspaper. "I looked at constructivist posters to study seemingly simple compositions," he explains. "If you turn it around you can still 'read' the image. The green and red background meets in the middle, so it works with the effect of folding a newspaper."

Tofu evolved from a sketch and was inspired by 1980s Italian comics. Painted with gouache, the circular elements and lettering were drawn in Illustrator: "I'm proud of the mix of art deco with futurism, the overlaps and the reversed cross-tattoo," he says.

Vanallemeersch was given four days to produce his Lexus advertorial. Asked to illustrate a shiny hybrid car in front of a busy city, he added extra technical detail, gradients and realism to the vehicle so that it stood out from the backdrop.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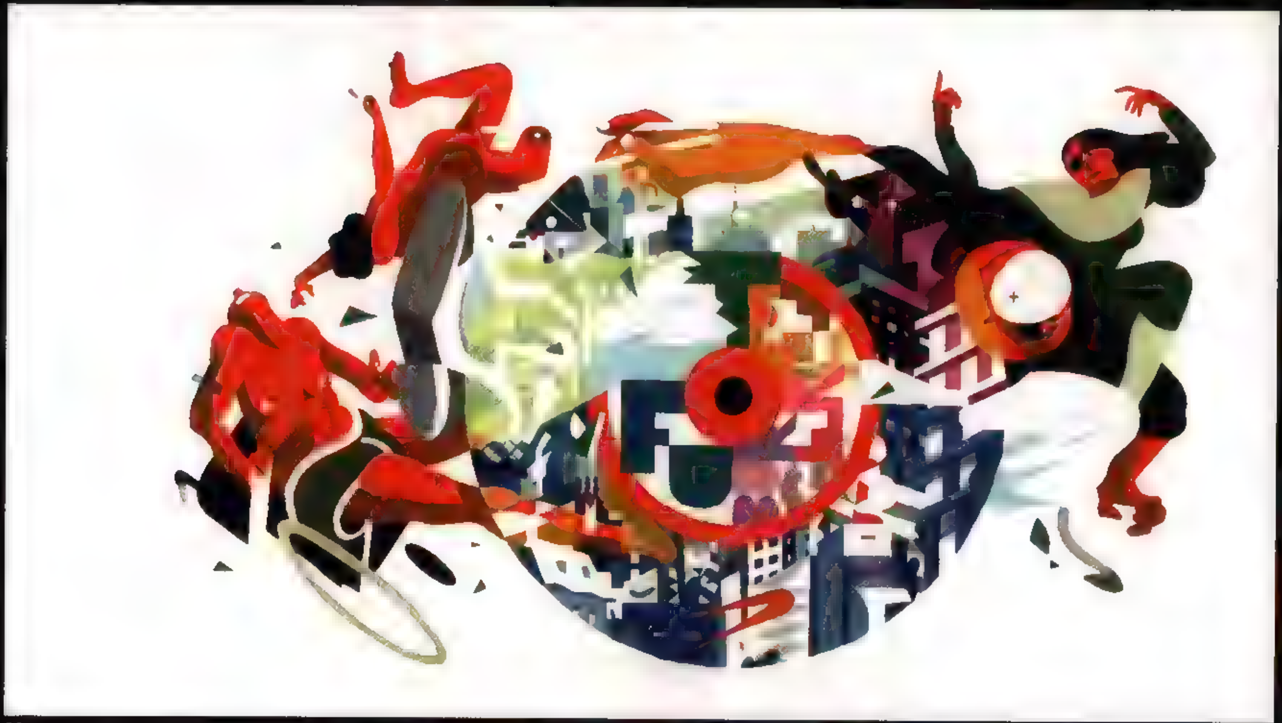
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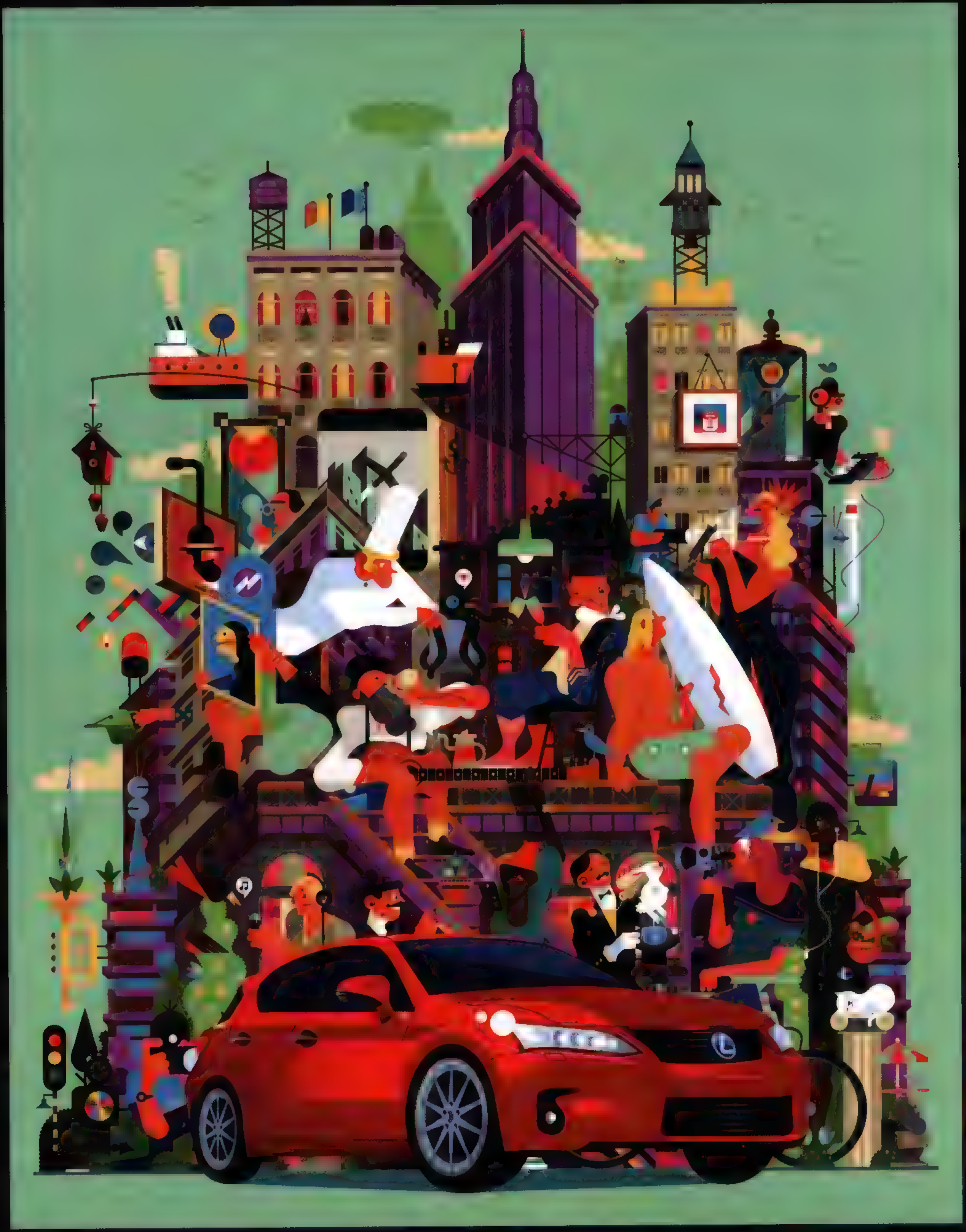

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01 Onionskin's Toshikazu Tamura says that the **City Planning video** was a learning process for the studio: "It was hard artistically and technically because it was the longest music video we've made so far."

02-03 The **futuristic visions** of illustrator Hiroshi Manabe provided Onionskin with inspiration for scenes where a rocket blasts off to establish a city on another planet.

CITYSCAPES IN 2.5D

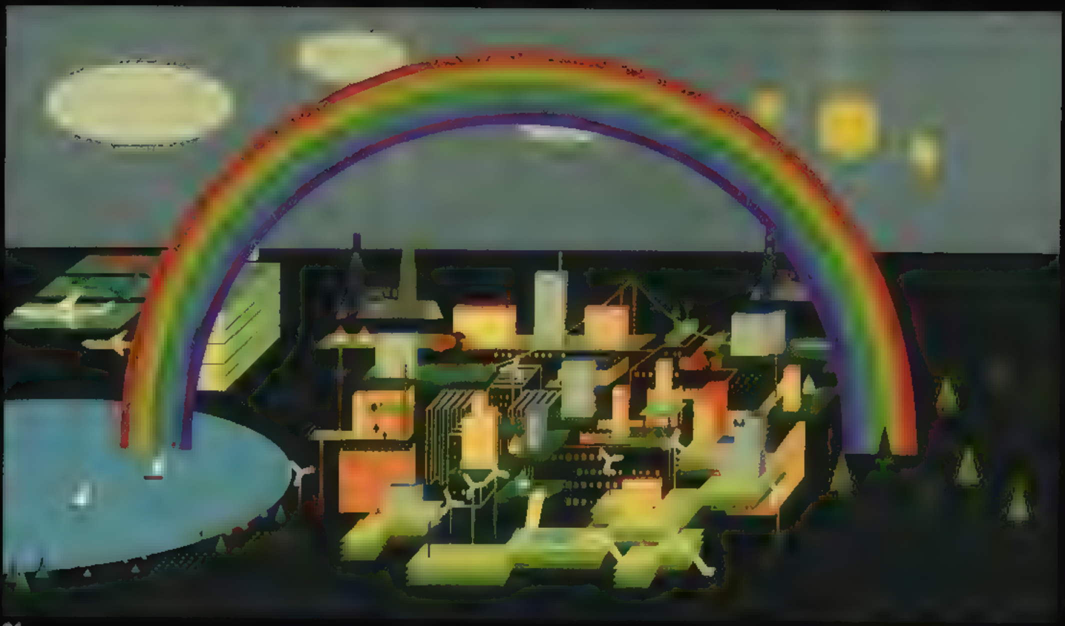
DESIGNER Onionskin
LOCTION Tokyo, Japan
PROJECT *City Planning* video
www.vimeo.com/onionskin

If you've ever spent more hours than is strictly wise cultivating your own urban sprawl in the game SimCity, you'll experience a familiar thrill when watching buildings pop out of the ground and roads shoot off towards the horizon in *City Planning*, animation duo Onionskin's new video for the latest track from Japanese indie group Doit Science. Yet according to Toshikazu Tamura – who formed Onionskin with fellow Tokyo University of the Arts student Ai Sugaya – the 90s PC-gaming phenomenon wasn't on their radars at all when they designed the video.

"It's very interesting: we had never played SimCity until we read the web comments comparing the two," Tamura says. "If we did it again, we would add a natural disaster scene like in the game."

The song's lyrics reference airfields, baseball fields, pedestrian crossings and the Tokyo Tower. "We planned a city that syncs with the rhythm and lyrics of the song," Tamura says. "We didn't make a storyboard exactly. We made many kinds of buildings and placed them in a completed drawing of the city in Illustrator. Then we opened it in After Effects and thought about how a city moved to music."

Tamura credits the colourful and whimsical world of Katamari Damacy as an influence, as well as the 1983 console game Antarctic Adventure. Accordingly, the landscape is neither flat nor 3D, but deliberately '2.5D'. "We didn't want to make something like existing motion graphic and 3D movies. We think that the expression of 2.5D, different from both 2D and 3D, is unique."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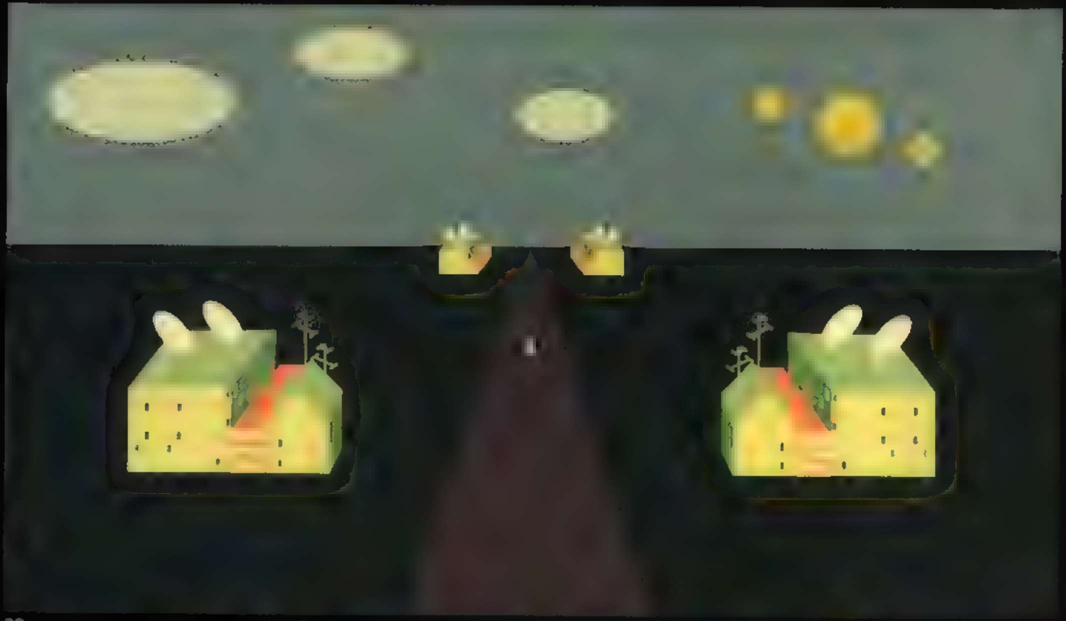
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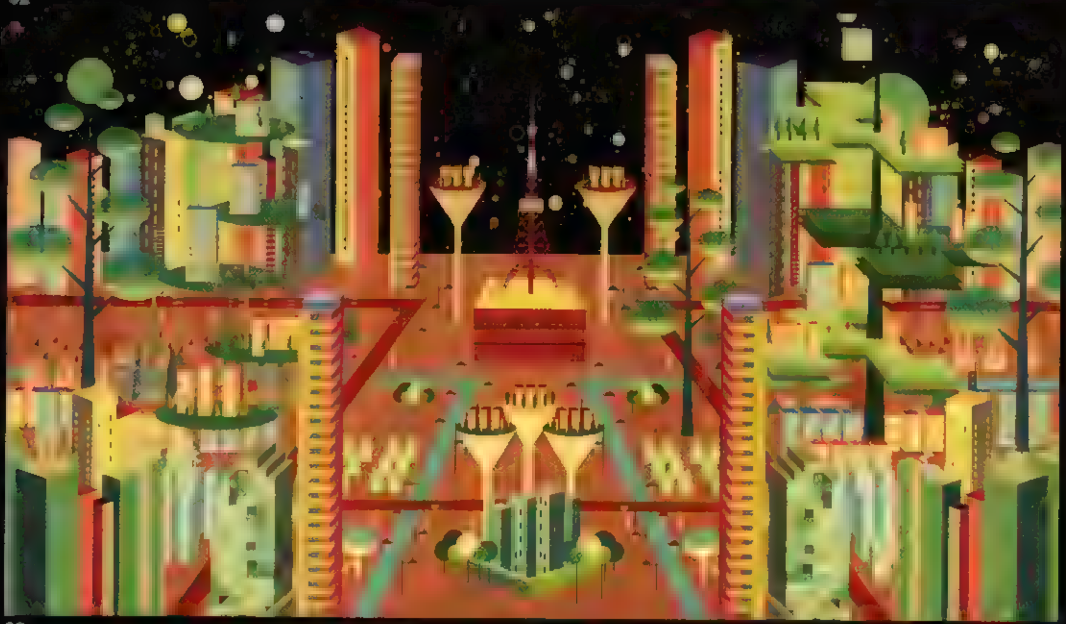
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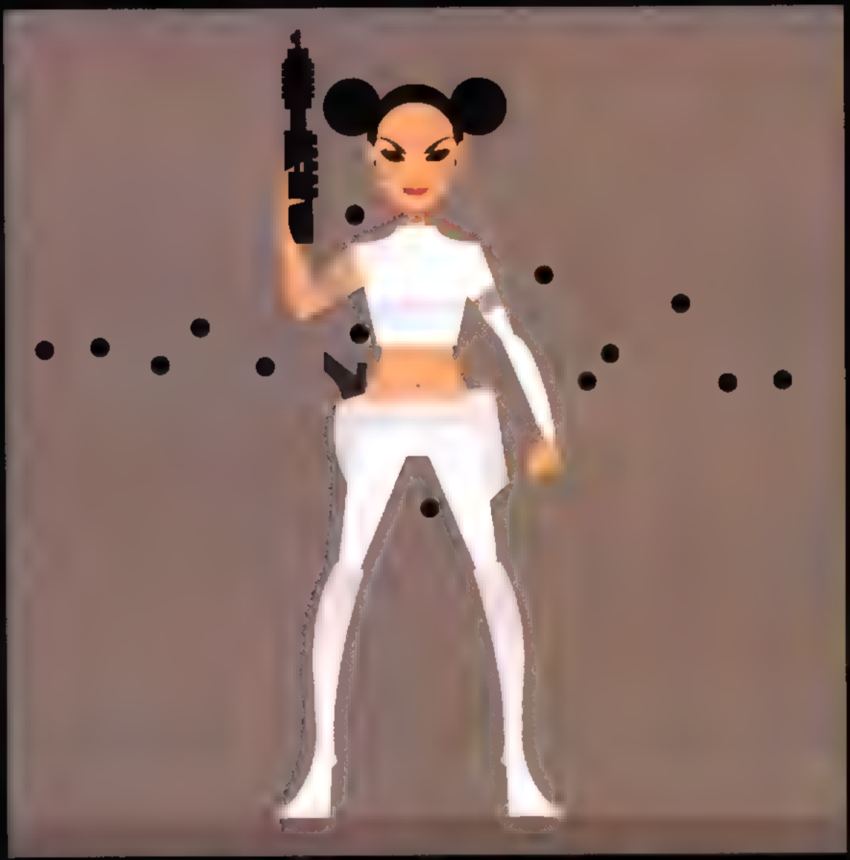
01-03 Briefed by *Wired* US, Manchester-based illustrator **Stanley Chow** served up a bullet-proof take on Princess Leia, a fashion-conscious Stormtrooper, and a portrait of *Lost* producer Carlton Cuse with a Death Star backdrop.



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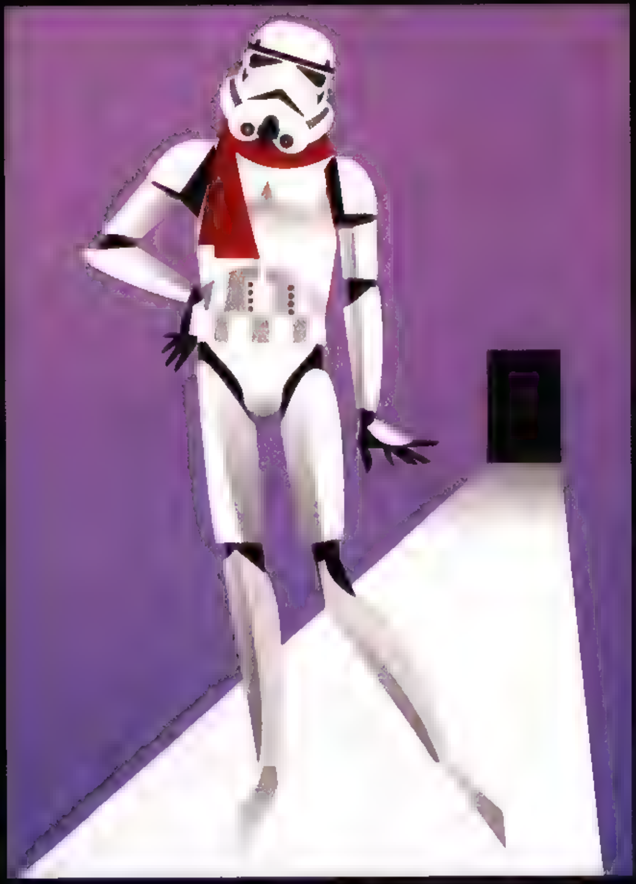

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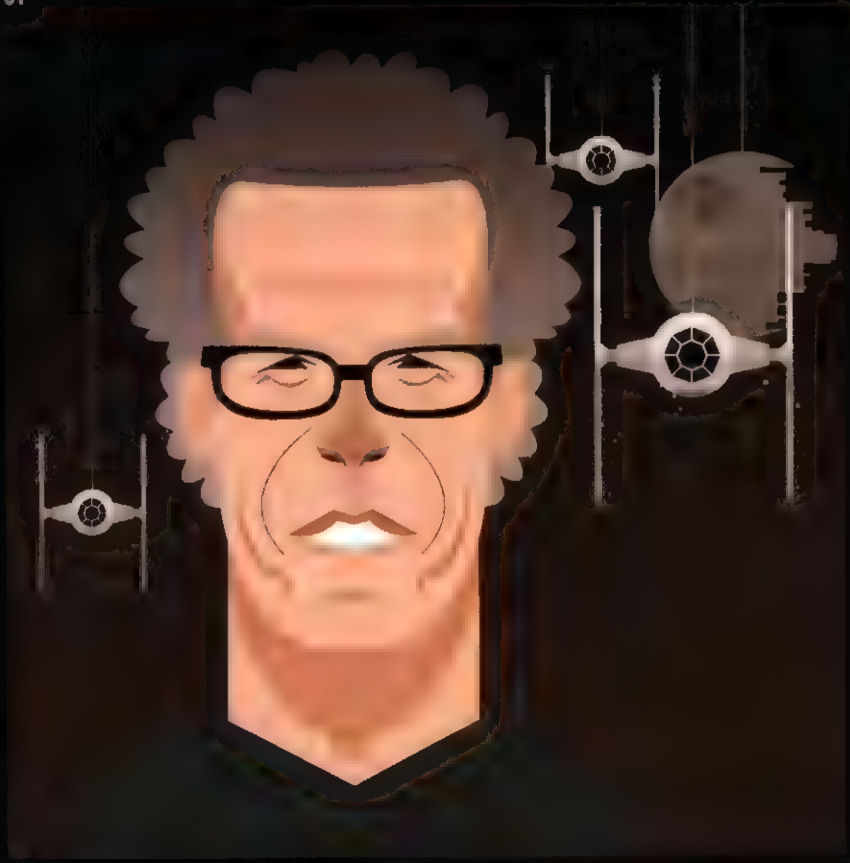


03

THE ILLUSTRATOR STRIKES BACK

DESIGNER Stanley Chow
LOCATION Manchester, England
PROJECT Editorial illustrations
www.stanleychowillustration.com

Wired US recently ran an article on the 74 things every great *Stars Wars* movie needs. On the recommendation of the *New Yorker*'s creative director Wyatt Mitchell, Stanley Chow was drafted in on illustration duty. "The brief was simple," Chow says. "'Here are 10 little articles about *Star Wars* – go illustrate them.'"

Many of the short pieces were written by people within the film and TV industry – including the writers and directors behind *Looper*, *Lost* and *Battlestar Galactica*. Chow created caricatures of them holding props and dressed in *Star Wars* garb. His illustrations also include a bullet-dodging Princess Leia, a Stormtrooper striking a pose on a catwalk and an amorous R2D2 – all of which were created in Illustrator. "I read the articles and illustrated what I felt would work. I wasn't really given any art direction. I guess they trusted me to do what I wanted."

While *Star Wars* fans are notoriously hardcore, Chow says the reaction to the designs has been very positive: "The illustrations have been a hit. I posted sneak previews on Instagram and I've had positive feedback – people have been asking if they will be made into posters."

If Chow could have any *Star Wars* character illustrate him, he knows exactly who he would pick: "A Gamorrean guard," he says. "I just think they look brilliant – ugly and brutal, but cute at the same time. I watched *Muppets in Space* with my kids, recently, and I'm sure Jim Henson had something to do with the design of the Gamorrean guard."

01-02 Craig&Karl's **Darcel Disappoints character** reflects the intercontinental duo's pared-back style. "We try and get the strongest message across with the simplest components," says Craig Redman. "The best thing about Darcel is that I designed him on impulse, he continues. "He's an outlet for my ideas."

03 This character was created as part of the promo for Melbourne's Rooftop Cinema "The hard part was getting the right mix of core components," explains Redman.

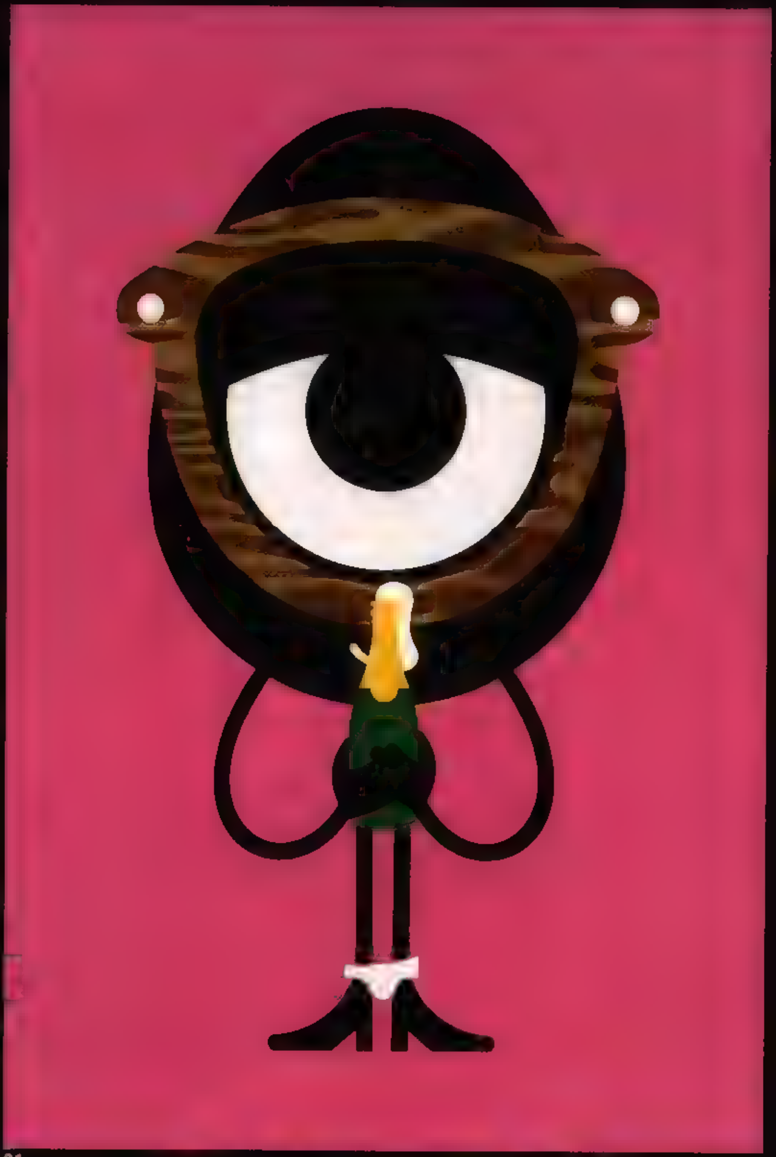
ILLUSTRATING HIPSTERS

DESIGNER Craig & Karl
LOCATION New York, USA and Sydney, Australia
PROJECT Darcel, Rooftop Cinema promo
www.craigandkarl.com

Intercontinental design duo Craig Redman and Karl Meyer may live in New York and Sydney respectively, but they collaborate on a daily basis on illustration, typography and character projects that have won them clients including *Vogue*, Nike and Apple.

One of Redman's favourite character creations is Darcel Disappoints, an unhappy hipster who skulks around New York, chronicling his life on a blog. "A friend of ours always describes hipsters as eggs on stilts – skinny jeans, developing beer gut – and this inspired his appearance," he explains. "The blog has led to commissions, which I think proves there is an adult market for these characters."

Another project is a very simplistic, gender-neutral character created to promote Melbourne's Rooftop Cinema events. "We made variations of our character for each movie," says Redman. "Its simple nature made it interchangeable."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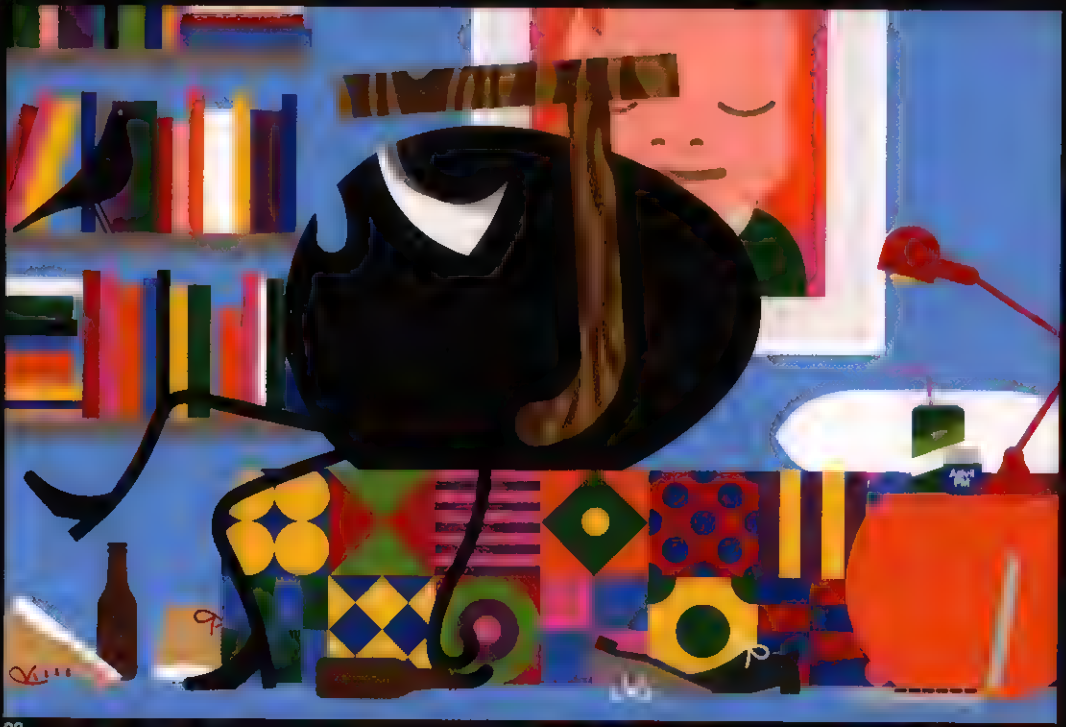
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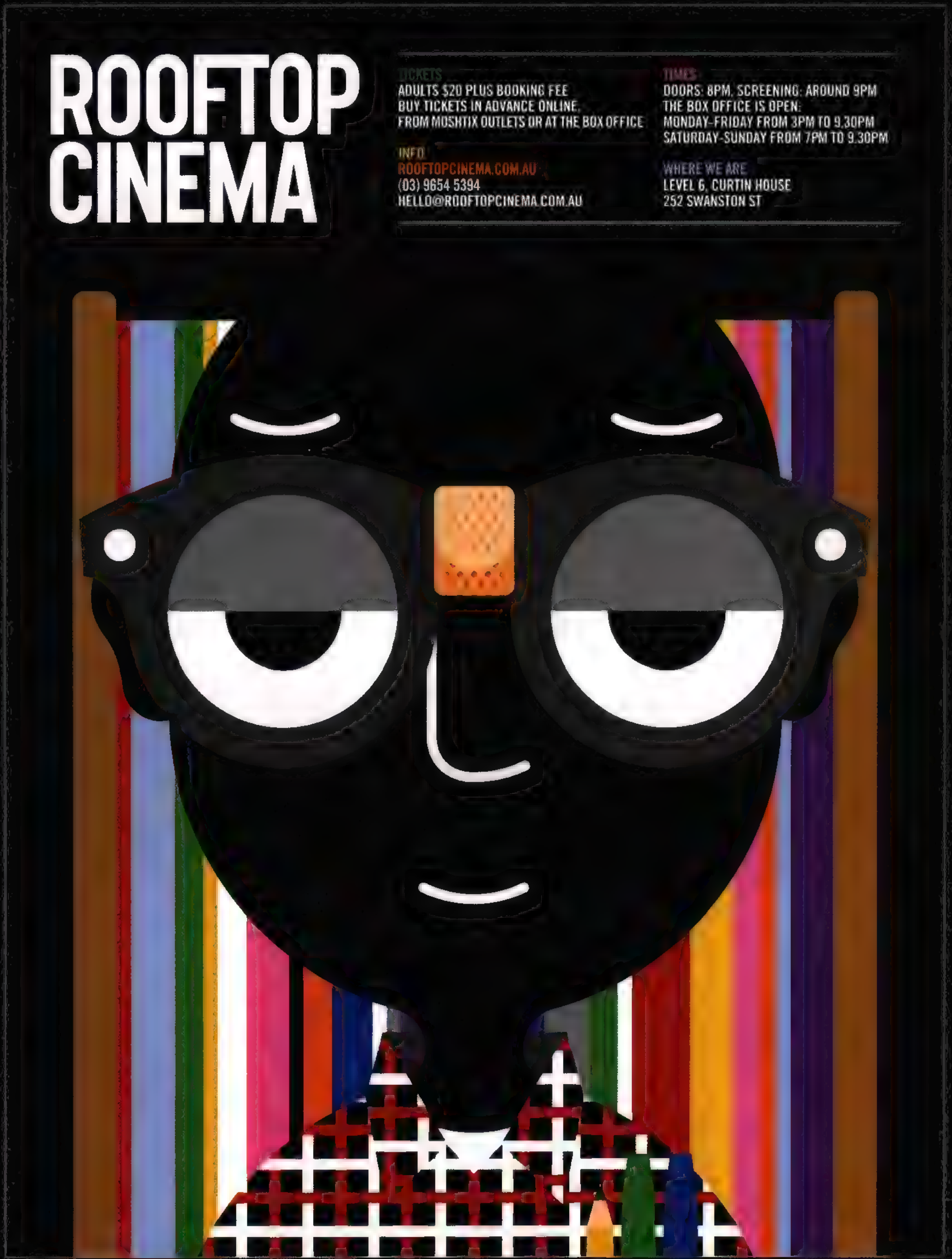

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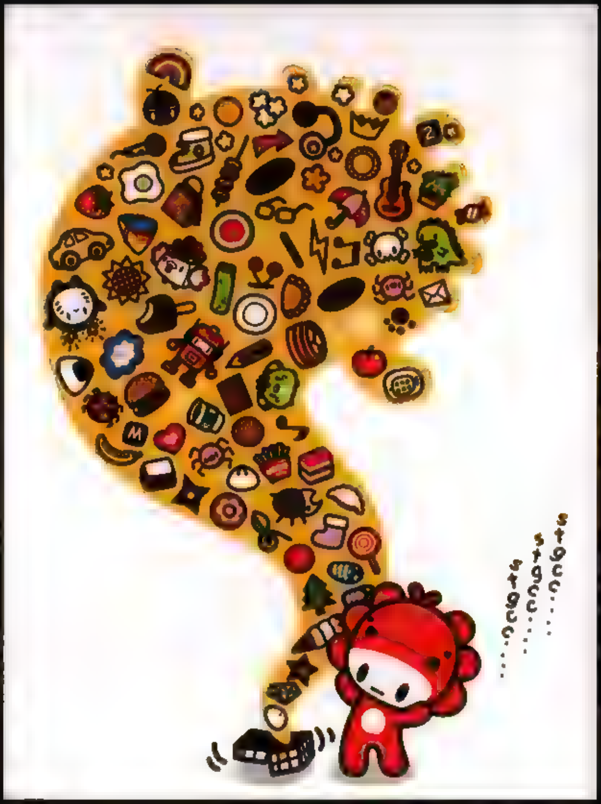
01 Ziqi Wu won a competition from the Singapore Toys, Games and Comics Convention to design this **yellow monster** for the event.

02 This **yeti character** was created as part of a research project for Pictoplasma.



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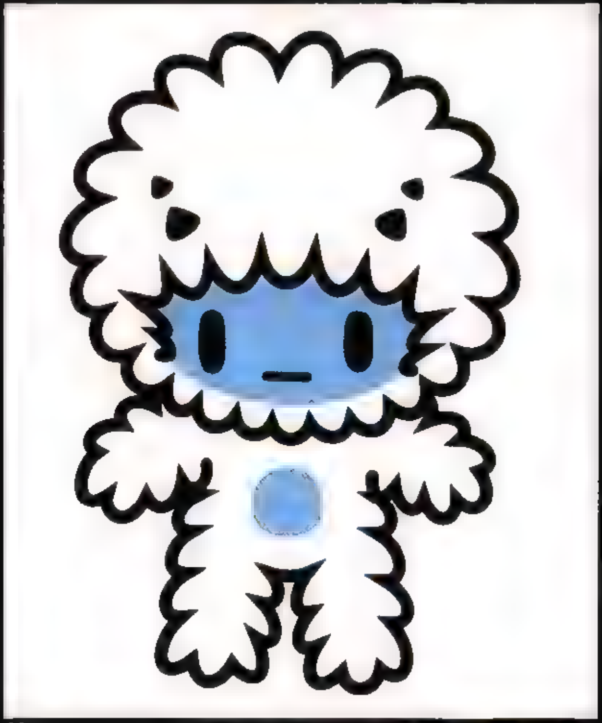


02

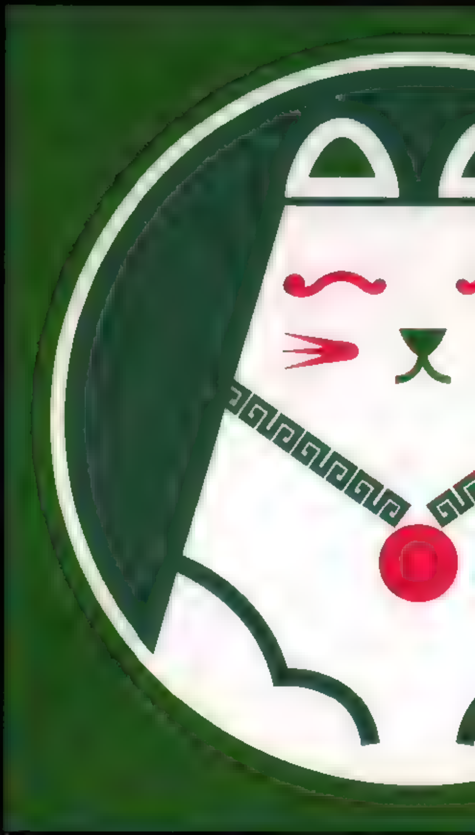
JAPANESE INFLUENCE

DESIGNER Ziqi Wu
LOCATION Singapore
PROJECT STGCC, Yeti QIQI
www.monsterlittle.com

Illustrator Ziqi Wu specialises in designing cute, friendly creatures inspired by his love for Japanese style. His collections of loveable critters are all collated on his Monster Little website.

One character that has managed to make it out of cyberspace is his illustration for the Singapore Toys, Games and Comics Convention. "I won a competition to design a character for the show," he explains. "The huge yellow monster contains everything that the convention means to me as a fan."

Another monster with a commercial application is the sweet yeti, which Wu created for Pictoplasma's missing link research project. "The brief was to create your own version of Yeti or Big Foot," he tells us. "The hardest part of the look and feel was getting the fur right. It took a while but I'm pleased with the final piece."



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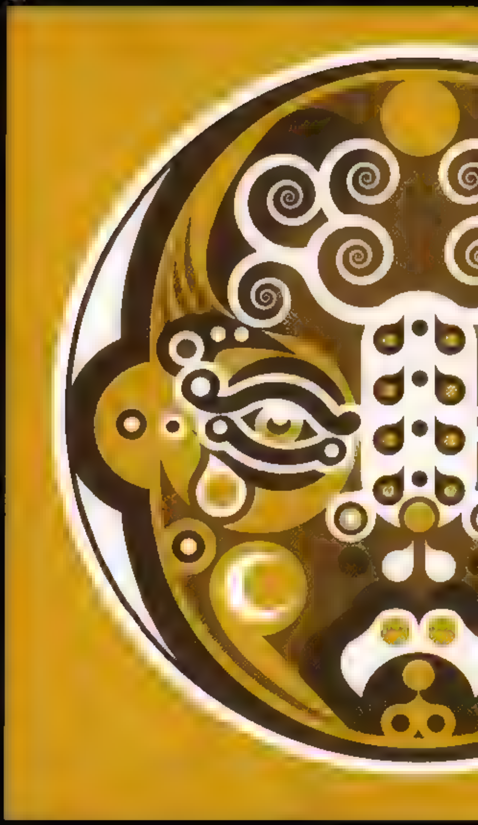
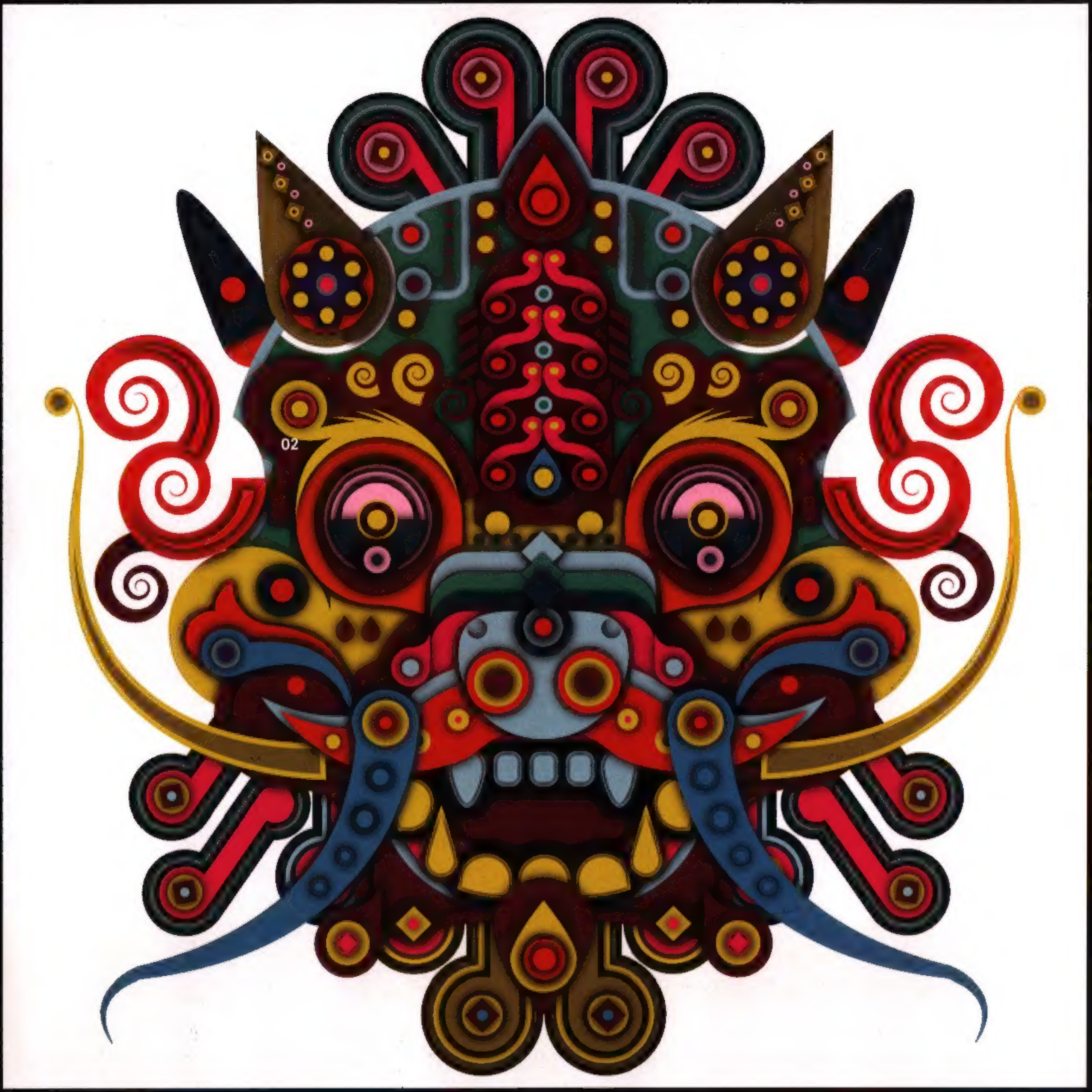


02

01-03 Jonny Wan's designs for the **Weston Park museum** were created in Illustrator so that they would be flexible when it came to scaling the pieces to multiple sizes



03

JOURNEY TO THE EAST

DESIGNER **Jonny Wan**
LOCTION **Sheffield, England**
PROJECT **Weston Park museum**
www.jonnywan.com

Illustrator Jonny Wan had no need to worry about being short on visual inspiration when design company The Cafeteria commissioned him to create images for an exhibition at Sheffield's Weston Park museum. Last summmer, The British Museum-curated China: Journey to the East, a hugely popular exhibition displaying thousands of years' worth of precious objects.

Manchester-based Wan created the main identity – featuring a dragon's head, as 2012 is the Chinese year of the dragon – and five secondary icons representing areas of Chinese history and innovation for use on large banners. "The depth and richness of China's history went hand-in-hand with my work, which is very much inspired by ancient art," he explains. "Creating the visual aesthetic of the illustrations for this project was therefore a natural progression."

Wan says that he's pleased to see his work alongside ancient artefacts: "It's very rare that exhibitions in galleries use illustration like this to promote their shows," he reflects, "so this was a unique aspect in itself."

The dragon's head features both on promotional material and as a large image at the exhibition entrance – so the designs had to be effective at multiple sizes. "The main challenge was striking the right balance, so it didn't look too cluttered when used on a smaller scale but was detailed enough when used for a larger format," Wan says. "I'm always interested in the different ways I can apply my illustration work away from the normal medium of print, so seeing it in a gallery space, on a large scale, is very refreshing."

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